

A. Lappray

1606/1514

H O M E R ' s

O D Y S S E Y.



THE
ODYSSEY
OF
HOMER.

TRANSLATED BY
ALEXANDER POPE.

VOLUME THIRD.

Rurfus, quid virtus, et quid sapientia possit,
Utile proposuit nobis exemplar Ulysses.

GLASGOW:

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M.DCC.LXVIII.

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THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XVII.

THE ARGUMENT.

TELEMACHUS returning to the city, relates to Penelope the sum of his travels. Ulysses is conducted by Eumaeus to the palace, where his old dog Argus acknowledges his master, after an absence of twenty years, and dies with joy. Eumaeus returns into the country, and Ulysses remains among the suitors, whose behaviour is described.

SOON as Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Sprinkled with roseate light the dewy lawn;
In haste the prince arose, prepar'd to part;
His hand impatient grasps the pointed dart;
Fair on his feet the polish'd sandals shine,
And thus he greets the master of the swine.

My friend adieu; let this short stay suffice;
I haste to meet my mother's longing eyes,
And end her tears, her sorrows, and her sighs.
But thou attentive, what we order heed;
This hapless stranger to the city lead;
By public bounty let him there be fed,
And bless the hand that stretches forth the bread.

To wipe the tears from all afflicted eyes,
 My will may covet, but my pow'r denies.
 If this raise anger in the stranger's thought,
 The pain of anger punishes the fault:
 The very truth I undisguis'd declare:
 For what so easy as to be sincere?

To this Ulysses. What the prince requires
 Of swift removal, seconds my desires.
 To want like mine, the peopled town can yield
 More hopes of comfort than the lonely field.
 Nor fits my age to till the labour'd lands,
 Or stoop to tasks a rural lord demands.
 Adieu! but since this ragged garb can bear
 So ill, th' inclemencies of morning air,
 A few hours space permit me here to stay;
 My steps Eumaeus shall to town convey,
 With riper beams when Phoebus warms the day.

Thus he: nor ought Telemachus reply'd,
 But left the mansion with a lofty stride:
 Schemes of revenge his pond'ring breast elate,
 Revolving deep the suitors' sudden fate.
 Arriving now before th' imperial hall,
 He props his spear against the pillar'd wall;
 Then like a lion o'er the threshold bounds;
 The marble pavement with his step resounds:
 His eye first glanc'd where Euryclea spreads
 With furry spoils of beasts the splendid beds:
 She saw, she wept, she ran with eager pace,
 And reach'd her master with a long embrace.
 All crowded round the family appears,
 With wild entrancement, and ecstatic tears.

Swift from above descends the royal fair;
 (Her beauteous cheeks the blush of Venus wear,
 Chasten'd with coy Diana's pensive air)
 Hangs o'er her son; in his embraces dies;
 Rains kisses on his neck, his face, his eyes:
 Few words she spoke, tho' much she had to say,
 And scarce those few, for tears, could force their way.

Light of my eyes! he comes! unhop'd-for joy!
 Has heav'n from Pylos brought my lovely boy?
 So snatch'd from all our cares!—Tell, hast thou known
 Thy father's fate, and tell me all thy own.

Oh dearest, most rever'd of womankind!
 Cease with those tears to melt a manly mind,
 (Reply'd the prince) nor be our fates deplor'd,
 From death and treason to thy arms restor'd.
 Go bathe, and rob'd in white, ascend the tow'rs;
 With all thy handmaids thank th' immortal pow'rs;
 To ev'ry God vow hecatombs to bleed,
 And call Jove's vengeance on their guilty deed.
 While to th' assembled council I repair;
 A stranger sent by heav'n attends me there;
 My new-accepted guest I haste to find,
 Now to Piraeus' honour'd charge consign'd.

The matron heard, nor was his word in vain.
 She bath'd; and rob'd in white, with all her train,
 To ev'ry God vow'd hecatombs to bleed,
 And call'd Jove's vengeance on the guilty deed.
 Arm'd with his lance the prince then past the gate;
 Two dogs behind, a faithful guard, await:
 Pallas his form with grace divine improves:
 The gazing crowd admires him as he moves.

4 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. XVII. 76.

Him, gath'ring round, the haughty suitors greet
 With semblance fair, but inward deep deceit.
 Their false addresses gen'rous he deny'd,
 Past on, and sat by faithful Mentor's side;
 With Antiphus, and Halitherses sage,
 (His father's counsellors, rever'd for age.)
 Of his own fortunes, and Ulysses' fame,
 Much ask'd the seniors; till Piraeus came.
 The stranger-guest pursu'd him close behind;
 Whom when Telemachus beheld, he join'd.
 He, (when Piraeus ask'd for slaves to bring
 The gifts and treasures of the Spartan king)
 Thus thoughtful answer'd: Those we shall not move,
 Dark and unconscious of the will of Jove:
 We know not yet the full event of all:
 Stabb'd in his palace if your prince must fall,
 Us, and our house if treason must o'erthrow,
 Better a friend possess them, than a foe:
 If death to these, and vengeance heav'n decree,
 Riches are welcome then, not else, to me.
 'Till then, retain the gifts——The hero said,
 And in his hand the willing stranger led.
 Then disarray'd, the shining bath they sought,
 With unguents smooth, of polish'd marble wrought;
 Obedient handmaids with assistant toil
 Supply the limpid wave, and fragrant oil:
 Then o'er their limbs refulgent robes they threw,
 And fresh from bathing, to their seats withdrew.
 The golden ew'r a nymph attendant brings,
 Replenish'd from the pure, translucent springs;

With copious streams that golden ew'r supplies

A silver laver of capacious size.

They wash: the table, in fair order spread,

Is pil'd with viands and the strength of bread.

Full opposite, before the folding gate,

The pensive mother sits in humble state;

Lowly she sat, and with dejected view

The fleecy threads her ivory fingers drew.

The prince and stranger shar'd the genial feast,

'Till now the rage of thirst and hunger ceast.

When thus the queen. My son! my only friend!

Say, to my mournful couch shall I ascend?

(The couch deserted now a length of years;

The couch, for ever water'd with my tears)

Say wilt thou not (ere yet the suitor-crew

Return, and riot shakes our walls a-new)

Say wilt thou not the least account afford?

The least glad tidings of my absent lord?

To her the youth. We reach'd the Pylian plains,

Where Nestor, shepherd of his people, reigns.

All arts of tenderness to him are known,

Kind to Ulysses' race as to his own;

No father, with a fonder grasp of joy,

Strains to his bosom his long-absent boy.

But all unknown, if yet Ulysses breathe,

Or glide a spectre in the realms beneath?

For farther search, his rapid steeds transport

My lengthen'd journey to the Spartan court.

There Argive Helen I beheld, whose charms

(So heav'n decreed) engag'd the great in arms.

6 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. XVII. 136.

My cause of coming told, he thus rejoin'd ;
And still his words live perfect in my mind.

Heav'ns! would a soft, inglorious, dastard train
An absent hero's nuptial joys prophane!
So with her young, amid the woodland shades,
A tim'rous hind the lion's court invades,
Leaves in that fatal lair her tender fawns,
And climbs the cliff, or feeds along the lawns;
Meantime returning, with remorseless sway
The monarch savage rends the panting prey:
With equal fury, and with equal fame,
Shall great Ulysses re-assert his claim.

O Jove! supreme! whom men and Gods revere;
And thou whose lustre gilds the rowling sphere!
With pow'r congenial join'd, propitious aid
The chief adopted by the martial maid!
Such to our wish the warrior soon restore,
As when, contending on the Lesbian shore,
His prowess Philomelides confest,
And loud-acclaiming Greeks the victor blest:
Then soon th' invaders of his bed, and throne,
Their love presumptuous shall by death atone.
Now what you question of my ancient friend,
With truth I answer; thou the truth attend.
Learn what I heard the * sea-born seer relate,
Whose eye can pierce the dark recess of fate.
Sole in an isle, imprison'd by the main,
The sad survivor of his num'rous train,
Ulysses lies; detain'd by magic charms,
And prest unwilling in Calypso's arms.

* Proteus,

No sailors there, no vessels to convey,
 Nor oars to cut th' immeasurable way—
 This told Atrides, and he told no more.
 Thence safe I voyag'd to my native shore.

He ceas'd; nor made the pensive queen reply,
 But droop'd her head, and drew a secret sigh.
 When Theoclymenus the seer began:
 Oh suff'ring consort of the suff'ring man!
 What human knowledge could, those kings might tell;
 But I the secrets of high heav'n reveal.
 Before the first of Gods be this declar'd,
 Before the board whose blessings we have shar'd;
 Witness the genial rites, and witness all
 This house holds sacred in her ample wall!
 Ev'n now this instant, great Ulysses lay'd
 At rest, or wand'ring in his country's shade,
 Their guilty deeds, in hearing, and in view.
 Secret revolves; and plans the vengeance due.
 Of this sure auguries the Gods bestow'd,
 When first our vessel anchor'd in your road.

Succeed those omens heav'n! (the queen rejoin'd)
 So shall our bounties speak a grateful mind;
 And ev'ry envy'd happiness attend
 The man, who calls Penelope his friend.

Thus commun'd they: while in the marble court
 (Scene of their insolence) the lords resort;
 Athwart the spacious square each tries his art
 To whirl the disk, or aim the missile dart.

Now did the hour of sweet repast arrive,
 And from the field the victim flocks they drive:

Medon the herald (one who pleas'd them best,
 And honour'd with a portion of their feast)
 To bid the banquet interrupts their play.
 Swift to the hall they haste; aside they lay
 Their garments, and succinct, the victims slay.
 Then sheep and goats and bristly porkers bled,
 And the proud steer was o'er the marble spread.

While thus the copious banquet they provide;
 Along the road conversing side by side,
 Proceed Ulysses and the faithful swain:
 When thus Eumaeus, gen'rous and humane.

To town, observant of our lord's behest,
 Now let us speed; my friend, no more my guest!
 Yet like myself I wish'd thee here prefer'd,
 Guard of the flock, or keeper of the herd.
 But much to raise my master's wrath I fear;
 The wrath of princes ever is severe.
 Then heed his will, and be our journey made
 While the broad beams of Phoebus are display'd,
 Or ere brown ev'ning spreads her chilly shade.

Just thy advice, (the prudent chief rejoin'd)
 And such as suits the dictate of my mind.
 Lead on: but help me to some staff to stay
 My feeble step, since rugged is the way.

Across his shoulders, then, the scrip he slung,
 Wide patch'd, and fasten'd by a twisted thong.
 A staff Eumaeus gave. Along the way
 Chearly they fare: behind, the keepers stay;
 These with their watchful dogs (a constant guard)
 Supply his absence, and attend the herd.

And now his city strikes the monarch's eyes,
 Alas! how chang'd! a man of miseries;
 Propt on a staff, a beggar old and bare,
 In rags dishonest flutt'ring with the air!
 Now pass'd the rugged road, they journey down
 The cavern'd way descending to the town,
 Where, from the rock, with liquid lapse distills
 A limpid fount; that spread in parting rills
 Its current thence to serve the city brings:
 An useful work! adorn'd by ancient kings.
 Neritus, Ithacus, Polyctor there
 In sculptur'd stone immortaliz'd their care,
 In marble urns receiv'd it from above,
 And shaded with a green surrounding grove;
 Where silver alders, in high arches twin'd,
 Drink the cool stream, and tremble to the wind.
 Beneath, sequester'd to the nymphs, is seen
 A mossie altar, deep embower'd in green;
 Where constant vows by travellers are pay'd,
 And holy horrors solemnize the shade.

Here with his goats, (not vow'd to sacred flame,
 But pamper'd luxury) Melanthius came;
 Two grooms attend him. With an envious look
 He ey'd the stranger, and imperious spoke.

The good old proverb how this pair fulfill!
 One rogue is usher to another still.
 Heav'n with a secret principle indu'd
 Mankind, to seek their own similitude.
 Where goes the swine-herd with that ill-look'd guest?
 That giant-glutton, dreadful at a feast!

Full many a post have those broad shoulders worn,
 From ev'ry great man's gate repuls'd with scorn?
 To no brave prize aspir'd the worthless swain,
 'Twas but for scraps he ask'd, and ask'd in vain.
 To beg, than work, he better understands;
 Or we perhaps might take him off thy hands.
 For any office could the slave be good,
 To cleanse the fold, or help the kids to food,
 If any labour those big joints could learn;
 Some whey, to wash his bowels, he might earn,
 To cringe, to whine, his idle hands to spread,
 Is all, by which that graceless maw is fed.
 Yet hear me! if thy impudence but dare
 Approach yon walls, I prophecy thy fare:
 Dearly, full dearly shalt thou buy thy bread
 With many a footstool thund'ring at thy head.

He thus: nor insolent of word alone,
 Spurn'd with his rustic heel his king unknown;
 Spurn'd, but not mov'd: he, like a pillar stood,
 Nor stirr'd an inch, contemptuous, from the road:
 Doubtful, or with his staff to strike him dead,
 Or greet the pavement with his worthless head.
 Short was that doubt; to quell his rage inur'd,
 The hero stood self-conquer'd, and endur'd.
 But hateful of the wretch, Eumaeus heav'd
 His hands obtesting, and this pray'r conceiv'd.
 Daughters of Jove! who from th' aethereal bow'rs
 Descend to swell the springs, and feed the flow'rs!
 Nymphs of this fountain! to whose sacred names
 Our rural victims mount in blazing flames!

To whom Ulysses' piety preferr'd
 The yearly firstlings of his flock, and herd;
 Succeed my wish; your votary restore:
 Oh be some God his convoy to our shore!
 Due pains shall punish then this slave's offence,
 And humble all his airs of insolence,
 Who proudly stalking, leaves the herds at large,
 Commences courtier, and neglects his charge.

What mutters he? (Melanthius sharp rejoins)
 This crafty miscreant big with dark designs?
 The day shall come; nay, 'tis already near,
 When slave! to sell thee at a price too dear,
 Must be my care; and hence transport thee o'er,
 (A load and scandal to this happy shore)
 Oh! that as surely great Apollo's dart,
 Or some brave suitor's sword, might pierce the heart
 Of the proud son; as that we stand this hour
 In lasting safety from the father's pow'r.

So spoke the wretch; but shunning farther fray,
 Turn'd his proud step, and left them on their way.
 Strait to the feastful palace he repair'd,
 Familiar enter'd, and the banquet shar'd;
 Beneath Eurymachus, his patron lord,
 He took his place, and plenty heap'd the board.

Meantime they heard, soft-circling in the sky,
 Sweet airs ascend, and heav'nly minstrelsie;
 (For Phemius to the lyre attun'd the strain:)
 Ulysses hearken'd, then address the swain.

Well may this palace admiration claim,
 Great, and respondent to the master's fame!

12 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. XVII. 316.

Stage above stage th' imperial structure stands,
Holds the chief honours and the town commands:
High walls and battlements the courts inclose,
And the strong gates defy a host of foes.
Far other cares its dwellers now employ;
The throng'd assembly, and the feast of joy:
I see the smokes of sacrifice aspire,
And hear (what graces ev'ry feast) the lyre.

Then thus Eumæus. Judge we which were best;
Amidst yon revellers a sudden guest
Chuse you to mingle, while behind I stay?
Or I first ent'ring introduce the way?
Wait for a space without, but wait not long;
This is the house of violence and wrong:
Some rude insult thy rev'rend age may bear;
For like their lawless lords, the servants are.

Just is, oh friend! thy caution, and address
(Reply'd the chief) to no unheedful breast;
The wrongs and injuries of base mankind
Fresh to my sense, and always in my mind.
The bravely-patient to no fortune yields:
On rolling oceans, and in fighting fields,
Storms have I past, and many a stern debate;
And now in humbler scene submit to fate.
What cannot Want? the best she will expose,
And I am learn'd in all her train of woes;
She fills with navies, hosts, and loud alarms
The sea, the land, and shakes the world with arms!

Thus, near the gates conferring as they drew,
Argus, the dog, his ancient master knew;

He, not unconscious of the voice, and tread,
 Lifts to the sound his ear, and rears his head.
 Bred by Ulysses, nourish'd at his board,
 But ah! not fated long to please his lord!
 To him his swiftness and his strength were vain;
 The voice of glory call'd him o'er the main.
 'Till then in ev'ry sylvan chace renown'd,
 With Argus, Argus, rung the woods around;
 With him the youth pursu'd the goat or fawn,
 Or trac'd the mazy leveret o'er the lawn.
 Now left to man's ingratitude he lay,
 Un-hous'd, neglected, in the public way;
 And where on heaps the rich manure was spread,
 Obscene with reptiles, took his sordid bed.

He knew his lord; he knew, and strove to meet,
 In vain he strove, to crawl, and kiss his feet;
 Yet (all he could) his tail, his ears, his eyes
 Salute his master, and confess his joys.
 Soft pity touch'd the mighty master's soul;
 Adown his cheek a tear unbidden stole,
 Stole unperceiv'd, he turn'd his head, and dry'd
 The drop humane: then thus impassion'd cry'd.

What noble beast in this abandon'd state
 Lies here all helpless at Ulysses' gate?
 His bulk and beauty speak no vulgar praise;
 If, as he seems, he was in better days,
 Some care his age deserves: Or was he priz'd
 For worthless beauty? therefore now despis'd?
 Such dogs, and men there are, meer things of state,
 And always cherish'd by their friends, the great.

Not Argus so, (Eumaeus thus rejoin'd)
 But serv'd a master of a nobler kind,
 Who never, never shall behold him more!
 Long, long since perish'd on a distant shore!
 Oh had you seen him, vig'rous, bold and young,
 Swift as a stag, and as a lion strong;
 Him no fell savage on the plain withstood,
 None scap'd him, bosom'd in the gloomy wood;
 His eye how piercing, and his scent how true,
 To winde the vapour in the tainted dew?
 Such, when Ulysses left his natal coast;
 Now years unnerve him, and his lord is lost!
 The women keep the gen'rous creature bare,
 A sleek and idle race is all their care:
 The master gone, the servants what restrains?
 Or dwells humanity where riot reigns?
 Jove fix'd it certain, that whatever day
 Makes man a slave, takes half his worth away.

This said, the honest herdsman strode before:
 The musing monarch pauses at the door:
 The dog whom fate had granted to behold
 His lord, when twenty tedious years had roll'd,
 Takes a last look, and having seen him, dies;
 So clos'd for ever faithful Argus' eyes!

And now Telemachus, the first of all,
 Observ'd Eumaeus ent'ring in the hall;
 Distant he saw, across the shady dome;
 Then gave a sign, and beckon'd him to come.
 There stood an empty seat, where late was plac'd
 In order due, the steward of the feast,

(Who now was busied carving round the board)
 Eumæus took, and plac'd it near his lord.
 Before him instant was the banquet spread,
 And the bright basket pil'd with loaves of bread.

Next came Ulysses, lowly at the door,
 A figure despicable, old, and poor,
 In squalid vests with many a gaping rent,
 Propt on a staff, and trembling as he went.
 Then, resting on the threshold of the gate,
 Against a cypress pillar lean'd his weight;
 (Smooth'd by the workman to a polish'd plain)
 The thoughtful son beheld, and call'd his swain:

These viands, and this bread, Eumæus! bear,
 And let yon' mendicant our plenty share:
 Then let him circle round the suitors board,
 And try the bounty of each gracious lord.
 Bold let him ask, encourag'd thus by me;
 How ill, alas! do want and shame agree?

His lord's command the faithful servant bears;
 The seeming beggar answers with his pray'rs.
 Blest be Telemachus! in ev'ry deed
 Inspire him Jove! in ev'ry wish succeed!
 This said, the portion from his son convey'd
 With smiles receiving, on his scrip he lay'd.
 Long as the minstrel swept the sounding wire,
 He fed, and ceas'd when silence held the lyre.
 Soon as the suitors from the banquet rose,
 Minerva prompts the man of mighty woes
 To tempt their bounties with a suppliant's art,
 And learn the gen'rous from th' ignoble heart;

(Not but his soul, resentful as humane,
 Dooms to full vengeance all th' offending train)
 With speaking eyes, and voice of plaintive sound,
 Humble he moves, imploring all around.
 The proud feel pity, and relief bestow,
 With such an image touch'd of human woe;
 Enquiring all, their wonder they confess,
 And eye the man, majestic in distress.

While thus they gaze and question with their eyes,
 The bold Melanthius to their thought replies.
 My lords! this stranger of gigantic port
 The good Eumæus usher'd to your court.
 Full well I mark'd the features of his face,
 Tho' all unknown his clime, or noble race.

And is this present, swincherd! of thy hand?
 Bring'st thou these vagrants to infest the land?
 (Returns Antinous with retorted eye)
 Objects uncouth! to check the genial joy.
 Enough of these our court already grace,
 Of giant stomach, and of famish'd face.
 Such guests Eumæus to his country brings,
 To share our feast, and lead the life of kings.

To whom the hospitable swain rejoin'd:
 Thy passion, prince, belies thy knowing mind.
 Who calls, from distant nations to his own,
 The poor, distinguish'd by their wants alone?
 Round the wide world are sought those men divine
 Who public structures raise, or who design;
 Those to whose eyes the Gods their ways reveal,
 Or bless with salutary arts to heal;

But chief to poets such respect belongs,
 By rival nations courted for their songs;
 These states invite, and mighty kings admire,
 Wide as the sun displays his vital fire.

It is not so with want! how few that feed
 A wretch unhappy, merely for his need?
 Unjust to me and all that serve the state,
 To love Ulysses is to raise thy hate.
 For me, suffice the approbation won
 Of my great mistress, and her god-like son.

To him Telemachus. No more incense
 The man by nature prone to insolence:
 Injurious minds just answers but provoke —
 Then turning to Antinous, thus he spoke.
 Thanks to thy care! whose absolute command
 Thus drives the stranger from our court and land.
 Heav'n bless its owner with a better mind!
 From envy free, to charity inclin'd.
 This both Penelope and I afford:
 Then, prince! be bounteous of Ulysses' board.
 To give another's is thy hand so slow?
 So much more sweet, to spoil, than to bestow?

Whence, great Telemachus! this lofty strain?
 (Antinous cries with insolent disdain)
 Portions like mine if ev'ry suitor gave,
 Our walls this twelvemonth should not see the slave.

He spoke, and lifting high above the board
 His pond'rous footstool, shook it at his lord.
 The rest with equal hand conferr'd the bread;
 He fill'd his scrip, and to the threshold sped;
 But first before Antinous stopt, and said.

18 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. XVII. 497.

Bestow, my friend! thou dost not seem the worst
Of all the Greeks, but prince-like and the first,
Then as in dignity, be first in worth,
And I shall praise thee thro' the boundless earth.
Once I enjoy'd in luxury of state
Whate'er gives man the envy'd name of Great;
Wealth, servants, friends, were mine in better days;
And hospitality was then my praise;
In every sorrowing soul I pour'd delight,
And poverty stood smiling in my sight.
But Jove, all-governing, whose only will
Determines fate, and mingles good with ill,
Sent me (to punish my pursuit of gain)
With roving pyrates o'er th' Ægyptian main:
By Ægypt's silver flood our ships we moor;
Our spies commission'd strait the coast explore;
But impotent of mind, with lawless will
The country ravage, and the natives kill.
The spreading clamor to their city flies,
And horse and foot in mingled tumult rise:
The red'ning dawn reveals the hostile fields
Horrid with bristly spears, and gleaming shields:
Jove thunder'd on their side: our guilty head
We turn'd to flight; the gath'ring vengeance spread
On all parts round, and heaps on heaps lay dead.
Some few the foes in servitude detain;
Death ill exchang'd for bondage and for pain!
Unhappy me a Cyprian took a board,
And gave to Dmetor, Cyprus' haughty lord:
Hither, to 'scape his chains, my course I steer,
Still curs'd by fortune, and insulted here!

To whom Antinous thus his rage exprest.
 What God has plagu'd us with this gormand guest?
 Unless at distance, wretch! thou keep behind,
 Another isle than Cyprus more unkind,
 Another Ægypt, shalt thou quickly find.
 From all thou beg'st, a bold audacious slave;
 Nor all can give so much as thou canst crave.
 Nor wonder I, at such profusion shown;
 Shameless they give, who give what's not their own.

The chief, retiring. Souls, like that in thee,
 Ill suit such forms of grace and dignity.
 Nor will that hand to utmost need afford
 The smallest portion of a wasteful board,
 Whose luxury whole patrimonies sweeps,
 Yet starving want, amidst the riot, weeps.

The haughty suitor with resentment burns,
 And sowl'ly smiling, this reply returns.
 Take that, ere yet thou quit this princely throng:
 And dumb for ever be thy stand'rous tongue!
 He said, and high the whirling tripod flung.
 His shoulder-blade receiv'd th'ungentle shock;
 He stood, and mov'd not, like a marble rock;
 But shook his thoughtful head, nor more complain'd,
 Sedate of soul, his character sustain'd,
 And inly form'd revenge: then back withdrew;
 Before his feet the well-fill'd scrip he threw,
 And thus with semblance mild address the crew.

May what I speak your princely minds approve,
 Ye peers and rivals in this noble love!
 Not for the hurt I grieve, but for the cause.
 When the sword our country's quarrel draws,

Or if defending what is justly dear,
 From Mars impartial some broad wound we bear;
 The gen'rous motive dignifies the fear.
 But for meer want, how hard to suffer wrong?
 Want brings enough of other ills along!
 Yet if injustice never be secure,
 If fiends revenge, and Gods assert the poor,
 Death shall lay low the proud aggressor's head,
 And make the dust Antinous' bridal bed.

Peace wretch! and eat thy bread without offence,
 (The suitor cry'd) or force shall drag thee hence,
 Scourge thro' the public street, and cast thee there,
 A mangled carcase for the hounds to tear.

His furious deed the gen'ral anger mov'd,
 All, ev'n the worst, condemn'd; and some reprov'd.
 Was ever chief for wars like these renown'd?
 Ill fits the stranger and the poor to wound.
 Unblest thy hand! if in this low disguise
 Wander, perhaps, some inmate of the skies;
 They (curious oft of mortal actions) deign
 In forms like these, to round the earth and main,
 Just and unjust recording in their mind,
 And with sure eyes inspecting all mankind.

Telemachus absorpt in thought severe,
 Nourish'd deep anguish, tho' he shed no tear;
 But the dark brow of silent sorrow shook:
 While thus his mother to her virgins spoke.
 "On him and his may the bright God of day
 "That base, inhospitable blow repay!"
 The nurse replies: "If Jove receives my pray'r,
 "Not one survives to breath to-morrow's air."

All, all are foes, and mischief is their end;
 Antinous most to gloomy death a friend;
 (Replies the queen) the stranger begg'd their grace,
 And melting pity soften'd ev'ry face;
 From ev'ry other hand redress he found,
 But fell Antinous answer'd with a wound.
 Amidst her maids thus spoke the prudent queen,
 Then bad Eumaeus call the pilgrim in.
 Much of th' experienc'd man I long to hear,
 If or his certain eye, or list'ning ear
 Have learn'd the fortunes of my wand'ring lord?
 Thus she, and good Eumaeus took the word.

A private audience if thy grace impart,
 The stranger's words may ease the royal heart:
 His sacred eloquence in balm distills,
 And the sooth'd heart with secret pleasure fills.
 Three days have spent their beams, three nights have run
 Their silent journey, since his tale begun,
 Unfinish'd yet, and yet I thirst to hear!
 As when some heav'n-taught poet charms the ear,
 (Suspending sorrow with celestial strain
 Breath'd from the Gods to soften human pain)
 Time steals away with unregarded wing,
 And the soul hears him, tho' he cease to sing.

Ulysses late he saw, on Cretan ground,
 (His father's guest) for Minos birth renown'd.
 He now but waits the wind, to waft him o'er
 With boundless treasure, from Thesprotia's shore.

To this the queen. The wand'rer let me hear,
 While yon luxurious race indulge their cheer,

Devour the grazing ox and browsing goat,
 And turn my gen'rous vintage down their throat.
 For where's an arm, like thine Ulysses strong,
 To curb wild riot and to punish wrong?

She spoke. Telemachus then sneez'd aloud;
 Constrain'd, his nostril echo'd thro' the crowd.
 The smiling queen the happy omen blest:
 "So may these impious fall, by fate oppress!
 Then to Eumaeus: bring the stranger, fly!
 And if my questions meet a true reply,
 Grac'd with a decent robe he shall retire,
 A gift in season which his wants require.

Thus spoke Penelope. Eumaeus flies
 In duteous haste, and to Ulysses cries.
 The queen invites thee, venerable guest!
 A secret instinct moves her troubled breast
 Of her long absent lord from thee to gain
 Some light, and sooth her soul's eternal pain.
 If true, if faithful thou, her grateful mind
 Of decent robes a present has design'd;
 So finding favour in the royal eye,
 Thy other wants her subjects shall supply.

Fair truth alone (the patient man reply'd)
 My words shall dictate, and my lips shall guide.
 To him, to me, one common lot was giv'n,
 In equal woes, alas! involv'd by heav'n.
 Much of his fates I know; but check'd by fear
 I stand: the hand of violence is here:
 Here boundless wrongs the starry skies invade,
 And injur'd suppliants seek in vain for aid.

Let for a space the pensive queen attend,
 Nor claim my story 'till the sun descend;
 Then in such robes as suppliants may require,
 Compos'd and chearful by the genial fire,
 When loud uproar and lawless riot cease,
 Shall her pleas'd ear receive my words in peace.

Swift to the queen returns the gentle swain:
 And say (she cries) does fear, or shame, detain
 The cautious stranger? with the begging kind
 Shame suits but ill. Eumæus thus rejoind:

He only asks a more propitious hour,
 And shuns (who wou'd not?) wicked men in power;
 At ev'ning mild (meet season to confer)
 By turns to question, and by turns to hear.

Whoe'er this guest (the prudent queen replies)
 His ev'ry step and ev'ry thought is wise.
 For men like these on earth he shall not find,
 In all the miscreant race of humankind.

Thus she. Eumæus all her words attends,
 And parting, to this suitor pow'rs descends:
 There seeks Telemachus, and thus apart
 In whispers breaths the fondness of his heart.

The time, my lord, invites me to repair
 Hence to the lodge; my charge demands my care.
 These sons of murder thirst thy life to take;
 Guard it, guard it, for thy servant's sake!

Thanks to my friend, he cries; but now the hour
 Of night draws on, go seek the rural bow'r:
 At first refresh: and at the dawn of day
 Offer a victim to the Gods convey.

Our life to heav'n's immortal pow'rs we trust,
Safe in their care, for heav'n protects the just.

Observant of his voice, Eumæus sat
And fed recumbent on a chair of state.
Then instant rose, and as he mov'd along
'Twas riot all amid the suitor-throng,
They feast, they dance, and raise the mirthful song.
'Till now declining tow'rd the close of day,
The sun obliquely shot his dewy ray.

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THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XVIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

The Fight of Ulysses and Irus.

THE beggar Irus insults Ulysses; the suitors promote the quarrel, in which Irus is worsted, and miserably handled. Penelope descends, and receives the presents of the suitors. The Dialogue of Ulysses with Eury-machus.

WHILE fix'd in thought the pensive hero sat,
A mendicant approach'd the royal gate;
A surly vagrant of the giant kind,
The stain of manhood, of a coward mind:
From feast to feast, insatiate to devour
He flew, attendant on the genial hour;
When on his mother's knees a babe he lay,
She nam'd Arnæus on his natal day,
But Irus his associates call'd the boy,
Præcis'd, the common messenger to fly,
Irus, a name expressive of th' employ.

From his own roof with meditated blows
He strove to drive the man of mighty woes.

Hence dotard, hence! and timely speed thy way,
Left dragg'd in vengeance, thou repent thy slay;

See how with nods assent yon princely train!
 But honouring age, in mercy I refrain;
 In peace away! lest if persuasions fail,
 This arm with blows more eloquent prevail.

To whom with stern regards: O insolence,
 Indecently to rail without offence!
 What bounty gives, without a rival share,
 I ask, what harms not thee, to breathe this air:
 Alike on alms we both precarious live:
 And canst thou envy, when the great relieve?
 Know from the bounteous heav'ns all riches flow,
 And what man gives, the Gods by man bestow;
 Proud as thou art, henceforth no more be proud,
 Lest I imprint my vengeance in thy blood;
 Old as I am, should once my fury burn,
 How wouldst thou fly, nor ev'n in thought return?

Mere woman-glutton! (thus the churl reply'd)
 A tongue so flippant, with a throat so wide!
 Why cease I, Gods! to dash those teeth away,
 Like some vile swine's, that greedy of his prey
 Uproots the bearded corn? rise, try the fight,
 Gird well thy loins, approach, and feel my might:
 Sure of defeat, before the peers engage;
 Unequal fight! when youth contends with age!

Thus in a wordy war their tongues display
 More fierce intents, preluding to the fray;
 Antinous hears, and in a jovial vein,
 Thus with loud laughter to the suitor-train.

This happy day in mirth, my friends employ,
 And lo! the Gods conspire to crown our joy.

See ready for the fight, and hand to hand,
 Yon furly mendicants contentious stand;
 Why urge we not to blows? Well-pleas'd they spring
 Swift from their seats, and thick'ning form a ring.

To whom Antinous. Lo! enrich'd with blood
 A kid's well-fatted entrails (tasteful food!)
 On glowing embers lie; on him bestow
 The choicest portion who subdues his foe;
 Grant him unrival'd in these walls to stay,
 The sole attendant on the genial day.

The lords applaud: Ulysses then with art,
 And fears well-feign'd, disguis'd his dauntless heart:
 Worn as I am with age, decay'd with woe,
 Say, is it baseness to decline the foe?
 Hard conflict! when calamity and age
 With vigorous youth, unknown to cares, engage!
 Yet fearful of disgrace, to try the day
 Imperious hunger bids, and I obey;
 But swear, impartial arbiters of right,
 Swear, to stand neutral while we cope in fight.

The peers assent: when strait his sacred head
 Telemachus uprais'd, and sternly said.

Stranger, if prompted to chastise the wrong
 Of this bold insolent, confide, be strong!
 Th' injurious Greek that dares attempt a blow,
 That instant makes Telemachus his foe;
 And these my * friends shall guard the sacred ties
 Of hospitality, for they are wise.

Then girding his strong loins, the king prepares
 To close in combat, and his body bares;

C 2

* Antinous and Eurymachus.

Broad spread his shoulders, and his nervous thighs
 By just degrees, like well turn'd columns rise:
 Ample his chest, his arms are round and long,
 And each strong joint Minerva knits more strong,
 (Attendant on her chief:) the suitor-crowd
 With wonder gaze, and gazing speak aloud;

Irus, alas! shall Irus be no more,
 Black fate impends, and this th' avenging hour!
 Gods! how his nerves a matchless strength proclaim:
 Swell o'er his well-strung limbs, and brace his frame!

Then pale with fears, and sick'ning at the sight,
 They dragg'd th' unwilling Irus to the fight;
 From his blank visage fled the coward blood,
 And his flesh trembled as aghast he stood:

O that such baseness should disgrace the light!
 O hide it, death, in everlasting night!
 (Exclaims Antinous) can a vigorous foe
 Meanly decline to combat age and woe?
 But hear me, wretch! if recreant in the fray,
 That huge bulk yield this ill-contested day,
 Instant thou sail'st, to Echetus resign'd,
 A tyrant, fiercest of the tyrant kind,
 Who casts thy mangled ears and nose a prey
 To hungry dogs, and lops the man away.

While with indignant scorn he sternly spoke,
 In ev'ry joint the trembling Irus shook;
 Now front to front each frowning champion stands,
 And poises high in air his adverse hands.
 The chief yet doubts, or to the shades below
 To fell the giant at one vengeful blow,

Or save his life; and soon his life to save
 The king resolves, for mercy sways the brave.
 That instant Irus his huge arm extends,
 Full on the shoulder the rude weight descends:
 The sage Ulysses, fearful to disclose
 The hero latent in the man of woes,
 Check'd half his might: yet rising to the stroke,
 His jaw-bone dash'd; the crashing jaw-bone broke:
 Down drop'd he stupid from the stunning wound,
 His feet extended, quivering beat the ground,
 His mouth and nostrils spout a purple flood,
 His teeth all shatter'd rush inmix'd with blood.

The peers transported, as outstretch'd he lies,
 With bursts of laughter rend the vaulted skies:

Then dragg'd along, all bleeding from the wound,
 His length of carcass trailing prints the ground;
 Rais'd on his feet, again he reels, he falls,
 'Till propp'd reclining on the palace walls;
 Then to his hand a staff the victor gave,
 And thus with just reproach address'd the slave.

There terrible, affright the dogs, and reign
 A dreaded tyrant o'er the bestial train!
 But mercy to the poor and stranger show,
 Lest heav'n in vengeance send some mightier woe.

Scornful he spoke, and o'er his shoulder flung
 The broad-patch'd scrip; the scrip in tatters hung
 Ill joyn'd, and knotted to a twisted thong. }
 Then turning short, disdain'd a further stay,
 But to the palace measur'd back the way.
 There as he rested, gathering in a ring
 The peers with smiles address their unknown king:

Stranger, may Jove and all th' aereal pow'rs,
 With ev'ry blessing crown thy happy hours!
 Our freedom to thy prowess'd arm we owe
 From bold intrusion of thy coward foe;
 Instant the flying sail the slave shall wing
 To Echetus, the monster of a king.

While pleas'd he hears, Antinous bears the food,
 A kid's well-fatted entrails, rich with blood:
 The bread from canisters of shining mold
 Amphinomus! and wines that laugh in gold,
 And oh! (he mildly cries) may heav'n display
 A beam of glory o'er thy future day!
 Alas the brave too oft is doom'd to bear
 The gripes of poverty, and slings of care.

To whom with thought mature the king replies:
 The tongue speaks wisely, when the soul is wise;
 Such was thy father! in imperial state,
 Great without vice, that oft attends the great:
 Nor from the fire art thou the son declin'd;
 Then hear my words, and grave them in thy mind!
 Of all that breathes, or groveling creeps on earth,
 Most vain is man! calamitous by birth.
 To-day with pow'r elate, in strength he blooms;
 The haughty creature on that pow'r presumes:
 Anon from heav'n a sad reverse he feels;
 Untaught to bear, 'gainst heav'n the wretch rebels.
 For man is changeful as his blifs or woe,
 Too high when prosp'rous, when distress too low.
 There was a day, when with the scornful great
 I swell'd in pomp, and arrogance of state;

Proud of the pow'r that to high birth belongs;
 And us'd that pow'r to justify my wrongs.
 Then let not man be proud: but firm of mind,
 Bear the best humbly, and the worst resign'd;
 Be dumb when heav'n afflicts! unlike yon train
 Of haughty spoilers, insolently vain;
 Who make their queen and all her wealth a prey:
 But vengeance and Ulysses wing their way.
 O may'st thou, favour'd by some guardian pow'r,
 Far, far be distant in that deathful hour?
 For sure I am, if stern Ulysses breathe,
 These lawless riots end in blood and death.

Then to the Gods the rosy juice he pours,
 And the drain'd goblet to the chief restores.
 Stung to the soul, o'ercast with holy dread,
 He shook the graceful honours of his head;
 His boding mind the future woe forestalls,
 In vain! by great Telemachus he falls,
 For Pallas seals his doom: all sad he turns
 To join the peers, resumes his throne, and mourns.

Meanwhile Minerva with instinctive fires
 Thy soul, Penelope, from heav'n inspires;
 With flatt'ring hopes the suitors to betray,
 And seem to meet, yet fly, the bridal day,
 Thy husband's wonder, and thy son's, to raise,
 And crown the mother and the wife with praise.
 Then, while the streaming sorrow dims her eyes,
 Thus with a transient smile the matron cries.

Eurynomè! to go where riot reigns
 I feel an impulse, tho' my soul disdains;

To my lov'd son the snares of death to show,
 And in the traitor friend unmask the foe;
 Who smooth of tongue, in purpose insincere,
 Hides fraud in smiles, while death is ambush'd there.

Go warn thy son, nor be the warning vain,
 (Reply'd the sagest of the royal train)
 But bath'd, anointed, and adorn'd descend;
 Pow'rful of charms, bid ev'ry grace attend;
 The tide of flowing tears a-while suppress;
 Tears but indulge the sorrow, not repress.
 Some joy remains: to thee a son is giv'n,
 Such as in fondness parents ask of heav'n.

Ah me! forbear, returns the queen, forbear;
 Oh! talk not, talk not of vain beauty's care!
 No more I bathe, since he no longer sees
 Those charms, for whom alone I wish'd to please.
 The day that bore Ulysses from this coast,
 Blasted the little bloom these cheeks could boast.
 But instant bid Antonoë descend,
 Instant Hippodamè our steps attend;
 Ill suits it, female virtue to be seen
 Alone indecent, in the walks of men.

Then while Eurynomè the mandate bears,
 From heav'n Minerva shoots with guardian cares;
 O'er all her senses, as the couch she prest,
 She pours a pleasing, deep, and death-like rest,
 With ev'ry beauty ev'ry feature arms,
 Bids her cheeks glow, and lights up all her charms,
 In her love-darting eyes awakes the fires,
 (Immortal gifts! to kindle soft desires)

From limb to limb an air majestic sheds,
 And the pure ivory o'er her bosom spreads,
 Such Venus shines, when with a measur'd bound
 She smoothly gliding swims th' harmonious round,
 When with the graces in the dance she moves,
 And fires the gazing Gods with ardent loves.

Then to the skies her flight Minerva bends,
 And to the queen the damsel train descends:
 Wak'd at their steps, her flowing eyes uncloset;
 The tear she wipes, and thus renews her woes.

Howe'er 'tis well! that sleep a-while can free
 With soft forgetfulness, a wretch like me;
 Oh! were it giv'n to yield this transient breath,
 Send, oh! Diana, send the sleep of death!
 Why must I waste a tedious life in tears,
 Nor bury in the silent grave my cares?
 O my Ulysses! ever honour'd name!
 For thee I mourn till death dissolves my frame.

Thus wailing, slow and sadly she descends,
 On either hand a damsel train attends:
 Full where the dome its shining valves expands,
 Radiant before the gazing peers she stands;
 A veil translucent o'er her brow display'd,
 Her beauty seems, and only seems, to shade:
 Sudden she lightens in their dazzled eyes,
 And sudden flames in ev'ry bosom rise;
 They send their eager souls with ev'ry look,
 Till silence thus th' imperial matron broke;

O why! my son, why now no more appears
 That warmth of soul that urg'd thy younger years?

Thy riper days no growing worth impart,
 A man in stature, still a boy in heart!
 Thy well-knit frame unprofitably strong,
 Speaks thee an hero from an hero sprung:
 But the just Gods in vain those gifts bestow,
 O wise alone in form, and brave in show!
 Heav'ns! could a stranger feel oppression's hand
 Beneath thy roof, and could'st thou tamely stand?
 If thou the stranger's righteous cause decline,
 His is the suff'rance, but the shame is thine.

To whom with filial awe, the prince returns:
 That gen'rous soul with just resentment burns,
 Yet taught by time, my heart has learn'd to glow
 For others good, and melt at others woe:
 But impotent these riots to repel,
 I bear their outrage, tho' my soul rebel:
 Helpless amid the snares of death I tread,
 And numbers leagu'd in impious union dread:
 But now no crime is theirs: this wrong proceeds
 From Irus, and the guilty Irus bleeds.
 O would to Jove! or her whose arms display
 The shield of Jove, or him who rules the day!
 That yon proud suitors, who licentious tread
 These courts, within these courts like Irus bled:
 Whose loose head tott'ring as with wine oppress'd,
 Obliquely drops, and nodding knocks his breast;
 Pow'rless to move, his stagg'ring feet deny
 The coward wretch the privilege to fly.

Then to the queen Eurymachus replies:
 O justly lov'd, and not more fair than wise!

Should Greece thro' all her hundred states survey
 Thy finish'd charms, all Greece would own thy sway,
 In rival clouds contest the glorious prize,
 Dispeopling realms to gaze upon thy eyes:
 O woman! loveliest of the lovely kind,
 In body perfect, and compleat in mind!

Ah me! returns the queen, when from this shore
 Ulysses sail'd, then beauty was no more!

The Gods decreed these eyes no more should keep
 Their wonted grace, but only serve to weep.

Should he return, whate'er my beauties prove,
 My virtues last; my brightest charm is love.

Now, grief, thou all art mine! the Gods o'ercaſt
 My soul with woes, that long, ah long must last!

Too faithfully my heart retains the day
 That sadly tore my royal lord away:

He grasp'd my hand, and oh my spouse! I leave
 Thy arms, (he cry'd) perhaps to find a grave:

He speaks the Trojans bold; they boast the skill
 To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill,

To dart the spear, and guide the rushing car
 With dreadful inroad thro' the walks of war.

My sentence is gone forth, and 'tis decreed
 Perhaps by righteous heav'n that I must bleed!

My father, mother, all, I trust to thee;

To them, to them transfer the love of me:

When my son grows man, the royal sway
 Sign, and happy be thy bridal day!

Such were his words; and Hymen now prepares
 To light his torch, and give me up to cares;

Th' afflictive hand of wrathful Jove to bear :
 A wretch the most compleat that breathes the air !
 Fall'n ev'n below the rights to woman due !
 Careless to please, with insolence ye woove !
 The gen'rous lovers, studious to succeed,
 Bid their whole herds and flocks in banquets bleed ;
 By precious gifts the vow sincere display :
 You, only you, make her ye love your prey.

Well-pleas'd Ulysses hears his queen deceive
 The suitor-train, and raise a thirst to give :
 False hopes she kindles, but those hopes betray,
 And promise, yet elude the bridal day.

While yet she speaks, the gay Antinous cries,
 Offspring of kings, and more than woman wise !
 'Tis right ; 'tis man's prerogative to give,
 And custom bids thee without shame receive ;
 Yet never, never from thy dome we move,
 'Till Hymen lights the torch of spousal love.

The peers dispatch their heralds to convey
 The gifts of love ; with speed they take the way.
 A robe Antinous gives of shining dyes,
 The varying hues in gay confusion rise
 Rich from the artist's hand ! twelve clasps of gold
 Close to the less'ning waist the vest infold ;
 Down from the swelling loins, the vest unbound
 Floats in bright waves redundant o'er the ground.
 A bracelet rich with gold, with amber gay,
 That shot effulgence like the solar ray,
 Eurymachus presents : and ear-rings bright,
 With triple stars, that cast a trembling light.

Pisander bears a necklace, wrought with art;
 And ev'ry peer, expressive of his heart,
 A gift bestows: this done, the queen ascends,
 And slow behind her damsel train attends.

Then to the dance they form the vocal strain,
 Till Hesperus leads forth the starry train;
 And now he raises, as the day-light fades,
 His golden circlet in the deep'ning shades:
 Three vases heap'd with copious fires display
 O'er all the palace a fictitious day;
 From space to space the torch wide-beaming burns,
 And brightly damsels trim the rays by turns.

To whom the king: Ill suits your sex to stay
 Alone with men! ye modest maids, away!
 Go, with the queen the spindle guide or cull
 The partners of her cares) the silver wool;
 'Tis my task the torches to supply
 Ev'n till the morning lamp adorns the sky;
 Ev'n till the morning, with unwearied care,
 Sleepless I watch; for I have learn'd to bear.

Scornful they heard: Melantho, fair and young,
 Melantho, from the loins of Dolius sprung,
 Who with the queen her years an infant led,
 With the soft fondness of a daughter bred)
 Chiefly derides: regardless of the cares
 Her queen endures, polluted joys she shares
 Nocturnal with Eurymachus: with eyes
 That speak disdain, the wanton thus replies.
 Oh! whether wanders thy distemper'd brain,
 Thou bold intruder on a princely train?

Hence to the vagrant's rendezvous repair;
 Or shun in some black forge the midnight air.
 Proceeds this boldness from a turn of soul,
 Or flows licentious from the copious bowl?
 Is it that vaquish'd Irus swells thy mind?
 A foe may meet thee of a braver kind,
 Who short'ning with a storm of blows thy stay,
 Shall send thee howling all in blood away!

To whom with frowns: O impudent in wrong!
 Thy lord shall curb that insolence of tongue;
 Know to Telemachus I tell th' offence:
 The scourge, the scourge shall lash thee into sense.

With conscious shame they hear the stern rebuke,
 Nor longer durst sustain the sov'reign look.

Then to the servile task the monarch turns
 His royal hands; each torch refulgent burns
 With added day: meanwhile in museful mood,
 Absorpt in thought, on vengeance fix'd he stood.
 And now the martial maid, by deeper wrongs
 To rouse Ulysses, points the suitors' tongues:
 Scornful of age, to taunt the virtuous man,
 Thoughtless and gay, Eurymachus began.

Hear me (he cries) confederates and friends!
 Some God no doubt this stranger kindly sends;
 The shining baldness of his head survey,
 It aids our torch-light, and reflects the ray.

Then to the king that levell'd haughty Troy.
 Say, if large hire can tempt thee to employ
 Those hands in work? to tend the rural trade,
 To dress the walk, and form th' embow'ring shade.

So food and raiment constant will I give :
 But itly thus thy soul prefers to live,
 And starve by strolling, not by work to thrive.

To whom incens'd: Should we, O prince, engage
 In rival tasks beneath the burning rage
 Of summer suns; were both constrain'd to wield
 Foodless, the scythe along the burthen'd field;
 Or should we labour while the plowshare wounds
 With steers of equal strength, th' allotted grounds;
 Beneath my labours how thy wond'ring eyes
 Might see the fable field at once arise!
 Should Jove dire war unloose, with spear and shield
 And nodding helm, I tread th' ensanguin'd field,
 Fierce in the van: then wou'dst thou, wou'dst thou, say,
 Minname me glutton in that glorious day?
 No, thy ill-judging thoughts the brave disgrace;
 'Tis thou injurious art, not I am base.

Proud, to seem brave among a coward train!
 But know thou art not valorous, but vain.
 Gods! should the stern Ulysses rise in might,
 These gates would seem too narrow for thy flight.

While yet he speaks, Eurymachus replies,
 With indignation flashing from his eyes.

Slave, I with justice might deserve the wrong,
 Should I not punish that opprobrious tongue;
 Irreverent to the great, and uncontroll'd,
 Art thou from wine, or innate folly, bold?
 Perhaps, these outrages from Irus flow,
 A worthless triumph o'er a worthless foe!

He said, and with full force a footstool threw:
 Whirl'd from his arm with erring rage it flew;

Ulysses, cautious of the vengeful foe,
 Stoops to the ground, and disappoints the blow.
 Not so a youth who deals the goblet round,
 Full on his shoulder it inflicts a wound,
 Dash'd from his hand the sounding goblet flies,
 He shrieks, he reels, he falls, and breathless lies.

Then wild uproar and clamour mounts the sky,
 'Till mutual thus the peers indignant cry;
 O had this stranger sunk to realms beneath,
 To the black realms of darkness and of death,
 Ere yet he trod these shores! to strife he draws
 Peer against peer; and what the weighty cause?
 A vagabond! for him the great destroy
 In vile ignoble jars, the feast of joy.

To whom the stern Telemachus arose!
 Gods! what wild folly from the goblet flows?
 Whence this unguarded openness of soul,
 But from the licence of the copious bowl?
 Or heav'n delusion sends. But hence, away!
 Force I forbear, and without force obey.

Silent, abash'd, they hear the stern rebuke,
 'Till thus Amphinomus the silence broke.

True are his words, and he whom truth offends
 Not with Telemachus, but truth contends;
 Let not the hand of violence invade
 The rev'rend stranger, or the spotless maid;
 Retire we hence! but crown with rosy wine
 The flowing goblet to the pow'rs divine;
 Guard he his guest beneath whose roof he stands:
 This justice, this the social right demands.

The peers assent; the goblet Mulius crown'd
With purple juice, and bore in order round;
Each peer successive his libation pours
To the blest Gods that fill th' aerial bow'rs;
Then swill'd with wine, with noise the crowds obey,
And rushing forth tumultuous reel away.

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BOOK XIX.

THE ARGUMENT.

The discovery of Ulysses to Euryclea.

ULYSSES and his son remove the weapons out of the armory. Ulysses in conversation with Penelope gives a fictitious account of his adventures; then assures her he had formerly entertain'd her husband in Crete; and describes exactly his person and dress, affirms to have heard of him in Phaeacia and Thesprotia, and that his return is certain, and within a month. He then goes to bathe, and is attended by Euryclea, who discovers him to be Ulysses by the scar upon his leg, which he formerly received in hunting the wild boar on Parnassus. The poet inserts a digression, relating that accident, with all its particulars.

CONSULTING secret with the blue-ey'd maid,
Still in the dome divine Ulysses stay'd:

Revenge mature for act inflam'd his breast;
And thus the son the fervent fire addrest.

Instant convey those steely stores of war
To distant rooms, dispos'd with secret care:
The cause demanded by the suitor-train,
To sooth their fears a specious reason feign:

Say since Ulysses left his natal coast,
 Obscene with smoke, their beamy lustre lost,
 His arms deform'd, the roof they won't adorn:
 From the glad walls inglorious lumber torn
 Suggest, that Jove the peaceful thought inspir'd,
 Lest they by sight of swords to fury fir'd,
 Dish nest wounds, or violence of soul,
 Defame the bridal feast, and friendly bowl.

The prince obedient to the sage command,
 To Euryclea thus: The female band
 In their apartments keep: secure the doors:
 These swarthy arms among the covert stores
 Are seem'ier hid; my thoughtless youth they blame,
 Imbrown'd with vapour of the smould'ring flame.

In happy hour, (pleas'd Euryclea cries)
 Tutor'd by early woes, grow early wise!
 Inspect with sharpen'd sight, and frugal care,
 Your patrimonial wealth, a prudent heir.
 But who the lighted taper will provide,
 (The female train retir'd) your toils to guide?

Without infringing hospitable right,
 This guest (he cry'd) shall bear the guiding light:
 I cheer no lazy vagrants with repast;
 They share the meal that earn it ere they taste.

He said; from female ken the strait secures
 The purpos'd deed, and guards the bolted doors:
 Auxiliar to his son, Ulysses bears
 The plummy-crested helms, and pointed spears
 With shields indented deep in glorious wars.
 Minerva viewless on her charge attends,
 And with her golden lamp his toil befriends:

Not such the sickly beams, which unsincere,
Gild the gross vapour of this nether sphere!

A present deity the prince confess'd,
And rap'd with ecstasy the fire address'd,

What miracle thus dazzles with surprize!

Distinct in rows the radiant columns rise:

The walls where-e'er my wond'ring sight I turn,

And roofs, amidst a blaze of glory burn!

Some visitant of pure ethereal race,

With his bright presence deigns the dome to grace.

Be calm, replies the fire; to none impart,

But oft revolve the vision in thy heart:

Celestials, mantl'd in excess of light,

Can visit unapproach'd by mortal sight.

Seek thou repose; whilst here I sole remain,

To explore the conduct of the female train:

The pensive queen perchance desires to know

The series of my toils, to soothe her woe.

With tapers flaming day his train attends,

His bright alcove th' obsequious youth ascends:

Soft slumb'rous shades his drooping eye-lids close

Till on her eastern throne Aurora glows.

Whilst, forming plans of death, Ulysses stay'd,

In council secret with the martial maid;

Attendant nymphs in beauteous order wait

The queen, descending from her bow'r of state.

Her cheeks the warmer blush of Venus wear,

Chasten'd with coy Diana's pensive air.

In ivory seat with silver ringlets grac'd,

By fam'd Icmalius wrought, the menials plac'd:

With ivory silver'd thick the foot-stool shone,
 O'er which the panther's various hide was thrown.
 The sovereign seat with graceful air she press'd;
 To different tasks their toil the nymphs address'd:
 The golden goblets some, and some restor'd
 From stains of luxury the polish'd board:
 These to remove th' expiring embers came,
 While those with unctuous fir foment the flame.

'Twas then Melantho with imperious mien
 Renew'd th' attack, incontinent of spleen:
 Avaunt, she cry'd, offensive to my sight!
 Deem not in ambush here to lurk by night,
 Into the woman-state asquint to pry;
 A day devourer, and an ev'ning spy!
 Vagrant begone! before this blazing brand
 Shall urge—and wav'd it hissing in her hand.

Th' insulted hero rolls his wrathful eyes,
 And, why, so turbulent of soul? he cries;
 Can these lean shrivel'd limbs unnerv'd with age,
 These poor but honest rags, enkindle rage?
 In crowds we wear the badge of hungry fate,
 And beg, degraded from superior state!
 Constrain'd! a rent-charge on the rich I live;
 Reduc'd to crave the good I once could give:
 A palace, wealth, and slaves, I late possess'd,
 And all that makes the great be call'd the bless'd:
 My gate, an emblem of my open soul,
 Embrac'd the poor, and dealt a bounteous dole.
 Scorn not the sad reverse, injurious maid!
 'Tis Jove's high will, and be his will obey'd!

For think thyself exempt: that rosy prime
 Must share the gen'ral doom of with'ring time:
 To some new channel soon, the changeful tide
 Of royal grace th'offended queen may guide;
 And her lov'd lord unplume thy tow'ring pride.
 Or were he dead, 'tis wisdom to beware:

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Sweet blooms the prince beneath Apollo's care;
 Your deeds with quick impartial eye surveys;
 Potent to punish what he cannot praise.

Her keen reproach had reach'd the sov'reign's ear;
 Equacious insolent! she cries, forbear:

To thee the purpose of my soul I told,
 Menial discourse unblam'd with him to hold.
 The storied labours of my wand'ring lord,
 To sooth my grief, he haply may record:
 Let him, my guest, thy venom'd rage hath stung;
 Thy head shall pay the forfeit of thy tongue!
 Let then on whom my palace-cares depend,
 Myrmomè, regard the stranger friend:

Seat soft spread with furry spoils prepare,
 Ne-distant for us both to speak, and hear.

The menial fair obeys with duteous haste:
 Seat adorn'd with furry spoils she plac'd:
 Ne distant for discourse the hero sat;

Then thus the sov'reign from her chair of state:
 Reveal, obsequious to my first demand,
 Thy name, thy lineage, and thy natal land.

He thus: O queen! whose far-resounding fame,
 Bounded only by the starry frame:
 Consummate pattern of imperial sway,
 Whose pious rule a warlike race obey!

In wavy gold thy summer vales are dress'd;
 Thy autumns bend with copious fruit oppress'd;
 With flocks and herds each grassy plain is stor'd;
 And fish of ev'ry fin thy seas afford:
 Their affluent joys the grateful realms confess;
 And bless the pow'r that still delights to bless.
 Gracious permit this pray'r, imperial dame!
 Forbear to know my lineage, or my name:
 Urge not this breast to heave, these eyes to weep;
 In sweet oblivion let my sorrow sleep!
 My woes awak'd will violate your ear;
 And to this gay censorious train, appear
 A winy vapour melting in a tear.

Their gifts the Gods resum'd (the queen rejoin'd.)
 Exterior grace, and energy of mind;
 When the dear partner of my nuptial joy,
 Auxiliar troops combin'd to conquer Troy.
 My lord's protecting hand alone would raise
 My drooping verdure, and extend my praise!
 Peers from the distant Samian shore resort;
 Here with Dulichians join'd, besiege the court:
 Zacythus, green with ever-shady groves,
 And Ithaca, presumptuous boast their loves:
 Obtruding on my choice a second lord,
 They press the Hymenaeon rite abhorr'd.
 Mis-rule thus mingling with domestic cares,
 I live regardless of my state-affairs:
 Receive no stranger-guest, no poor relieve;
 But ever for my lord in secret grieve!——
 This art, instinct by some coelestial pow'r,
 I try'd, elusive of the bridal hour:

Ye peers, I cry, who press to gain a heart,
 Where dead Ulysses claims no future part;
 Rebate your loves, each rival suit suspend,
 'Till this funereal web my labours end:
 Cease, till to good Laertes I bequeath
 A pall of state, the ornament of death.
 For when to fate he bows, each Grecian dame
 With just reproach were licens'd to defame;
 Shou'd he, long honour'd in supreme command,
 Want the last duties of a daughter's hand."

The fiction pleas'd! their loves I long elude;
 The night still ravell'd, what the day renew'd,
 Three years successful in my art conceal'd,
 My ineffectual fraud the fourth reveal'd:
 Befriended by my own domestic spies,
 The woof unwrought the suitor-train surprize.
 From nuptial rites they now no more recede,
 And fear forbids to falsify the breed.

My anxious parents urge a speedy choice,
 And to their suffrage gain the filial voice:
 For rule mature, Telemachus deplores
 His dome dishonour'd, and exhausted stores——
 But stranger! as thy days seem full of fate,
 Divide discourse, in turn thy birth relate:
 Thy port asserts thee of distinguish'd race;
 No poor un-father'd product of disgrace.

Princess! he cries, renew'd by your command,
 The dear remembrance of my native land,
 Of secret grief unseals the fruitful source;
 And tears repeat their long-forgotten course!

So pays the wretch, whom fate constrains to roam,
The dues of nature to his natal home!——

But inward on my soul let sorrow prey;
Your sov'reign will my duty bids obey.

Crete awes the circling waves, a fruitful soil!
And ninety cities crown the sea-born isle:
Mix'd with her genuine sons, adopted names
In various tongues avow their various claims:
Cydonians, dreadful with the bended yew,
And bold Pelasgi boast a native's due:
The Dorians, plum'd amid the files of war,
Her fruitful glebe with fierce Achaians share;
Cnossus, her capital of high command;
Where sceptred Minos with impartial hand
Divided right; each ninth revolving year
By Jove receiv'd, in council to confer.
His son Deucalion bore successive sway;
His son, who gave me first to view the day!
The royal bed an elder issue blest,
Idomencus, whom Ilian fields attest
Of matchless dead: untrain'd to martial toil
I liv'd inglorious in my native isle,
Studious of my peace; and Æthon is my name.
'Twas then to Crete the great Ulysses came;
For elemental war, and wintry Jove,
From Malea's gusty cape his navy drove
To bright Lucina's fane; the shelvy coast
Where loud Amnisus in the deep is lost.
His vessels moor'd, (an incommodious port!)
The hero sped to the Cnossian court:

Ardent the partner of his arms to find;
 In leagues of long commutual friendship join'd.
 Vain hope! ten suns had warm'd the western strand,
 Since my brave brother with his Cretan band
 Had sail'd for Troy; but to the genial feast
 My honour'd roof receiv'd the royal guest:
 Beeves for his train the Cnossian peers assign,
 A public treat, with jars of gen'rous wine.
 Twelve days, while Boreas vex'd th' aerial space,
 My hospitable dome he deign'd to grace:
 And when the north had ceas'd the stormy roar,
 He wing'd his voyage to the Phrygian shore.

Thus the fam'd heroe, perfected in wiles,
 With fair similitude of truth beguiles
 The queen's attentive ear: dissolv'd in woe,
 From her bright eyes the tears unbounded flow.
 As snows collected on the mountain freeze;
 When milder regions breathe a vernal breeze,
 The fleecy pile obeys the whisp'ring gales,
 Ends in a stream, and murmurs thro' the vales:
 So, melted with the pleasing tale he told,
 Down her fair cheek the copious torrent roll'd:
 She to her present lord laments him lost,
 And views that object which she wants the most!
 With'ring at heart to see the weeping fair,
 His eyes look stern, and cast a gloomy stare;
 Of horn the stiff relentless balls appear,
 Or globes of iron fix'd in either sphere;
 Firm wisdom interdicts the soft'ning tear.
 A speechless interval of grief ensues,
 Till thus the queen the tender theme renews.

Stranger! that e'er thy hospitable roof
 Ulysses grac'd, confirm by faithful proof:
 Delineate to my view my warlike lord,
 His form, his habit, and his train record.

'Tis hard, he cries, to bring to sudden sight
 Ideas that have wing'd their distant flight:
 Rare on the mind those images are trac'd,
 Whose footsteps twenty winters have defac'd:
 But what I can, receive. — In ample mode,
 A robe of military purple flow'd
 O'er all his frame: illustrious on his breast,
 The double-clasping gold the king confest.
 In the rich woof a hound mosaic drawn
 Bore on full stretch, and seiz'd a dappl'd fawn:
 Deep in the neck his fangs indent their hold;
 They pant, and struggle in the moving gold.
 Fine as a filmy web beneath it shon
 A vest, that dazzl'd like a cloudless sun:
 The female train who round him throng'd to gaze,
 In silent wonder sigh'd unwilling praise.
 A sabre, when the warrior press'd to part,
 I gave, enamel'd with Vulcanian art:
 A mantle purple-ting'd, and radiant vest,
 Dimension'd equal to his size, express
 Affection grateful to my honour'd guest.
 A fav'rite herald in his train I knew,
 His visage solemn sad, of fable hue:
 Short woolly curls o'erfleec'd his bending head,
 O'er which a promontory-shoulder spread:
 Eurybates! in whose large soul alone
 Ulysses view'd an image of his own.

His speech the tempest of her grief restor'd;
 In all he told she recogniz'd her lord:
 But when the storm was spent in plenteous show'rs,
 A pause inspiriting her languish'd pow'rs,
 O thou, she cry'd, whom first inclement fate
 Made welcome to my hospitable gate;
 With all thy wants the name of poor shall end;
 Henceforth live honour'd, my domestic friend!
 The vest much envy'd on your native coast,
 And regal robe with figur'd gold embost,
 In happier hours my artful hand employ'd,
 When my lov'd lord this blissful bow'r enjoy'd:
 The fall of Troy erroneous and forlorn
 Doom'd to survive, and never to return!

Then he, with pity touch'd: O royal dame!
 Your ever-anxious mind, and beauteous frame,
 From the devouring rage of grief reclaim.
 Not the fondness of your soul reprove
 For such a lord! who crown'd your virgin-love
 With the dear blessing of a fair increase;
 Himself adorn'd with more than mortal grace:
 Yet while I speak, the mighty woe suspend;
 Truth forms my tale; to pleasing truth attend.
 The royal object of your dearest care,
 Breathes in no distant clime the vital air:
 In rich Thesprotia, and the nearer bound
 Of Thessaly, his name I heard renown'd:
 Without retinue, to that friendly shore
 Welcom'd with gifts of price, a sumless store!
 His sacrilegious train, who dar'd to prey
 On herds devoted to the God of day,

Were doom'd by Jove, and Phoebus' just decree,
 To perish in the rough Trinacrian sea.
 To better fate the blameless chief ordain'd,
 A floating fragment of the wreck regain'd,
 And rode the storm; 'till by the billows tost,
 He landed on the fair Phaeacian coast.
 That race, who emulate the life of Gods,
 Receive him joyous to their blest abodes:
 Large gifts confer, a ready sail command,
 'To speed his voyage to the Grecian strand.
 But your wise lord, (in whose capacious soul
 High schemes of pow'r in just succession roul)
 His Ithaca refus'd from fav'ring fate,
 'Til copious wealth might guard his regal state.
 Phedon the fact affirm'd, whose sov'reign sway
 Thesprotian tribes, a duteous race, obey:
 And bade the Gods this added truth attest,
 (While pure libations crown'd the genial feast)
 That anchor'd in his port the vessels stand,
 To waft the hero to his natal land.
 I for Dulichium urge the wat'ry way,
 But first the Ulyssean wealth survey:
 So rich the value of a store so vast
 Demands the pomp of centuries to waste!
 The darling object of your royal love,
 Was journey'd thence to Dodonean Jove;
 By the sure precept of the sylvan shrine,
 To form the conduct of his great design:
 Irresolute of soul, his state to shrowd
 In dark disguise, or come, a king avow'd?

Thus lives your lord; nor longer doom'd to roam:
Soon will he grace this dear paternal dome.

By Jove, the source of good, supreme in pow'r!

By the blest genius of this friendly bow'r!

I ratifie my speech; before the sun

His annual longitude of heav'n shall run;

When the pale empress of yon' starry train

In the next month renews her faded wane,

Ulysses will assert his rightful reign.

What thanks! what boon! reply'd the queen, are due,

When time shall prove the storied blessing true:

My lord's return shou'd fate no more retard,

Envy shall sicken at thy vast reward.

But my prophetic fears, alas! presage,

The wounds of destiny's relentless rage

Long must weep! nor will Ulysses come,

With royal gifts to send you honour'd home!——

Your other task, ye menial train, forbear:

Now wash the stranger, and the bed prepare;

With splendid palls the downy fleece adorn:

Up-rising early with the purple morn,

His sinews shrunk with age, and stiff with toil,

In the warm bath foment with fragrant oil,

Then with Telemachus the social feast

Partaking free, my sole invited guest;

Whoe'er neglects to pay distinction due,

The breach of hospitable right may rue.

The vulgar of my sex I most exceed

In real fame, when most humane my deed:

And vainly to the praise of queen aspire,

Stranger! I permit that mean attire,

Beneath the feastful bow'r. A narrow space
 Confines the circle of our destin'd race;
 'Tis ours, with good the scanty round to grace.
 Those who to cruel wrong their state abuse,
 Dreaded in life, the mutter'd curse pursues;
 By death dis-rob'd of all their savage pow'rs,
 Then, licens'd rage her hateful prey devours.
 But he whose in-born worth his acts commend,
 Of gentle soul, to human race a friend;
 The wretched he relieves diffuse his fame,
 And distant tongues extol the patron-name.

Princess, he cry'd, in vain your bounties flow
 On me, confirm'd, and obstinate in woe,
 When my lov'd Crete receiv'd my final view,
 And from my weeping eyes her cliffs withdrew;
 These tatter'd weeds (my decent robe resign'd.)
 I chose, the livery of a woful mind!
 Nor will my heart-corroding cares abate
 With splendid palls, and canopies of state:
 Low-couch'd on earth, the gift of sleep I scorn,
 And catch the glances of the waking morn.
 The delicacy of your courtly train
 To wash a wretched wand'rer wou'd disdain;
 But if, in tract of long experience try'd,
 And sad similitude of woes ally'd,
 Some wretch reluctant views aerial light,
 To her mean hand assign the friendly rite.

Pleas'd with his wise reply, the queen rejoïn'd:
 Such gentle manners, and so sage a mind,
 In all who grac'd this hospitable bow'r
 I ne'er discern'd, before this social hour.

Such servant as your humble choice requires,
 To light receiv'd the lord of my desires,
 New from the birth: and with a mother's hand
 His tender bloom to manly growth sustain'd:
 Of matchless prudence, and a duteous mind;
 Though now to life's extremest verge declin'd,
 Of strength superior to the toil assign'd.—

Rise, Euryclea! with officious care
 For the poor friend the cleansing bath prepare:
 This debt his correspondent fortunes claim,
 Too like Ulysses, and perhaps the same!
 Thus old with woes my fancy paints him now!
 For age untimely marks the careful brow.

Instant obsequious to the mild command,
 And Euryclea rose: with trembling hand
 She veils the torrent of her tearful eyes;
 And thus impassion'd to herself replies.

Son of my love, and monarch of my cares!
 What pangs for thee this wretched bosom bears?
 Are thus by Jove who constant beg his aid
 With pious deed, and pure devotion, paid?
 We never dar'd defraud the sacred fane,
 Of perfect hecatombs in order slain:
 There oft implor'd his tutelary pow'r,
 Long to protract the sad sepulchral hour;
 That form'd for empire with paternal care,
 His realm might recognize an equal heir.
 Destin'd head! The pious vows are lost;
 As God forgets him on a foreign coast!—
 Perhaps, like thee, poor guest! in wanton pride
 The rich insult him, and the young deride!

Conscious of worth revil'd, thy gen'rous mind
 The friendly rite of purity declin'd;
 My will concurring with my queen's command,
 Accept the bath from this obsequious hand.
 A strong emotion shakes my anguish'd breast;
 In thy whole form Ulysses seems express:
 Of all the wretched harbour'd on our coast,
 None imag'd e'er like thee my master lost.

Thus half discover'd thro' the dark disguise,
 With cool composure feign'd, the chief replies:
 You join your suffrage to the public vote;
 The same you think, have all beholders thought.

He said: replenish'd from the purest springs,
 The laver strait with busy care she brings:
 In the deep vase, that shone like burnish'd gold,
 The boiling fluid temperates the cold.
 Meantime revolving in his thoughtful mind
 The scar, with which his manly knee was sign'd;
 His face averting from the crackling blaze,
 His shoulders intercept th' unfriendly rays.
 Thus cautious, in th' obscure he hop'd to fly
 The curious search of Euryclea's eye.
 Cautious in vain! nor ceas'd the dame to find
 The scar, with which his manly knee was sign'd.

This on Parnassus combating the boar,
 With glancing rage the tusky savage tore.
 Attended by his brave maternal race,
 His grandsire sent him to the sylvan chace,
 Autolycus the bold: (a mighty name
 For spotless faith, and deeds of martial fame:

Hermes his patron-God whose gifts bestow'd,
 Those shrine with weanling lambs he went to load.)
 His course to Ithaca this hero sped,
 When the first product of Laertes' bed
 Was new disclos'd to birth: the banquet ends,
 When Euryclea from the queen descends,
 And to his fond embrace the babe commends.
 Receive, she cries, your royal daughter's son;
 And name the blessing that your pray'rs have won."
 Then thus the hoary chief. " My victor arms
 Have aw'd the realms around with dire alarms:
 A sure memorial of my dreaded fame
 The boy shall bear; Ulysses be his name!
 And when with filial love the youth shall come
 To view his mother's foil, my Delphic dome
 With gifts of price shall send him joyous home."
 He said with the promis'd boon, when youthful prime
 Was in man, his mother's natal clime
 Ulysses sought; with fond affection dear
 Amphithea's arms receiv'd the royal heir:
 Her ancient * lord an equal joy possess;
 Instant he bade prepare the genial feast:
 Steer to form the sumptuous banquet bled,
 Those stately growth five flow'ry summers fed:
 As sons divide, and roast with artful care
 The limbs; then all the tasteful viands share.
 He ceas'd discourse (the banquet of the soul)
 Till Phoebus wheeling to the western goal
 Sign'd the skies, and night involv'd the pole.
 Their drooping eyes the slumb'rous shade oppress,
 And they rose, and all retir'd to rest.

Autolycus.

Soon as the morn, new-rob'd in purple light,
 Pierc'd with her golden shafts the rear of night;
 Ulysses, and his brave maternal race
 The young Autolyçi, assay the chace.
 Parnassus, thick perplex'd with horrid shades,
 With deep-mouth'd hounds the hunter-troop invades
 What time the sun, from ocean's peaceful stream,
 Darts o'er the lawn his horizontal beam.
 The pack impatient snuff the tainted gale;
 The thorny wilds the wood-men fierce assail:
 And foremost of the train, his cornel spear
 Ulysses wav'd, to rouse the savage war.
 Deep in the rough recesses of the wood,
 A lofty copse, the growth of ages, stood:
 Nor winter's boreal blast, nor thund'rous show'r,
 Nor solar ray, cou'd pierce the shady bow'r,
 With wither'd foliage strew'd, a heapy store!
 The warm pavilion of a dreadful boar.
 Rous'd by the hounds and hunters' mingled cries,
 The savage from his leafy sounder flies:
 With fiery glare his sanguine eye-balls shine,
 And bristles high impale his horrid chine.
 Young Ithacus advanc'd, defies the foe,
 Poising his lifted lance in act to throw:
 The savage renders vain the wound decreed,
 And springs impetuous with opponent speed!
 His tusks oblique he aim'd the knee to goar;
 Aslope they glanc'd, the sinewy fibres tore,
 And bar'd the bone: Ulysses undismay'd,
 Soon with redoubl'd force the wound repay'd;

To the right shoulder-joint the spear apply'd,
 His further flank with streaming purple dy'd:
 On earth he rush'd with agonizing pain;
 With joy, and vast surprize, th' applauding train
 View'd his enormous bulk extended on the plain.
 With bandage firm Ulysses' knee they bound;
 Then chanting mystic lays, the closing wound
 Of sacred melody confess'd the force;
 The tides of life regain'd their azure course.
 Then back they led the youth with loud acclaim;
 Antolycus, enamour'd with his fame,
 Confirm'd the cure: and from the Delphic dome
 With added gifts return'd him glorious home.
 He safe at Ithaca with joy receiv'd,
 Relates the chace, and early praise atchiev'd.

Deep o'er his knee inseam'd, remain'd the scar:
 Which noted token of the woodland war
 When Euryclea found, the ablution ceas'd;
 Down dropp'd the leg, from her slack hand releas'd!
 The mingled fluids from the vase redound;
 The vase reclining floats the floor around!
 Miles dew'd with tears the pleasing strife express
 Of grief, and joy, alternate in her breast.
 Her flutt'ring words in melting murmurs dy'd;
 At length abrupt—my son!—my king!—she cry'd.
 His neck with fond embrace infolding fast,
 All on the queen her raptur'd eyes she cast,
 Ardent to speak the monarch safe restor'd:
 Yet studious to conceal her royal lord,
 Minerva fix'd her mind on views remote,
 And from the present bliss abstracts her thought.

His hand to Euryclea's mouth apply'd,
 Art thou foredoom'd my pest? the hero cryd:
 Thy milky founts my infant lips have drain'd;
 And have the fates thy babling age ordain'd
 To violate the life thy youth sustain'd?
 An exile have I told, with weeping eyes,
 Full twenty annual suns in distant skies:
 At length return'd, some God inspires thy breast
 To know thy king, and here I stand confest.
 This heav'n-discover'd truth to thee consign'd,
 Reserve, the treasure of thy inmost mind:
 Else if the Gods my vengeful arm sustain,
 And prostrate to my sword the suitor-train;
 With their lewd mates, thy undistinguish'd age
 Shall bleed a victim to vindictive rage.

Then thus rejoin'd the dame, devoid of fear:
 What words, my son, have pass'd thy lips severe?
 Deep in my soul the trust shall lodge secur'd,
 With ribs of steel, and marble heart immur'd.
 When heav'n, auspicious to thy right avow'd,
 Shall prostrate to thy sword the suitor-crowd;
 The deeds I'll blazon of the menial fair;
 The lewd to death devote, the virtuous spare.

Thy aid avails me not, the chief reply'd;
 My own experience shall their doom decide;
 A witness-judge precludes a long appeal:
 Suffice it thee thy monarch to conceal.

He said: obsequious with redoubl'd pace,
 She to the fount conveys th' exhausted vase:
 The bath renew'd, she ends the pleasing toil
 With plenteous unction of ambrosial oil.

Adjusting to his limbs the tatter'd vest,
 His former seat receiv'd the stranger guest;
 Whom thus with pensive air the queen address:
 Tho' night, dissolving grief in grateful ease,
 Your drooping eyes with soft oppression seize;
 Now hile, reluctant to her pleasing force,
 suspend the restless hour with sweet discourse.
 The day (ne'er brighten'd with a beam of joy!)
 My menials, and domestic cares employ:
 And, unattended by sincere repose,
 The night assists my ever-wakeful woes:
 When nature's hush'd beneath her brooding shade,
 My echoing griefs the starry vault invade.
 As when the months are clad in flow'ry green,
 And Philomel, in bow'ry shades unseen,
 To vernal airs attunes her varied strains;
 And Itylus sounds warbling o'er the plains:
 Young Itylus, his parents darling joy!
 Whom chance mis-led the mother to destroy:
 Now doom'd a wakeful bird to wail the beauteous boy.
 In nocturnal solitude forlorn,
 A sad variety of woes I mourn!
 My mind reflective, in a thorny maze
 Perplex'd, from care to care incessant strays.
 Now, wav'ring doubt succeeds to long despair;
 Shall I my virgin nuptial vow revere;
 And joining to my son's my menial train,
 Partake his councils, and assist his reign?
 Or, since mature in manhood, he deploras
 His dome dishonour'd, and exhausted stores;

Shall I, reluctant! to his will accord;
 And from the peers select the noblest lord;
 So by my choice avow'd, at length decide
 These wasteful love-debates, a mourning bride?—
 A visionary thought I'll now relate,
 Illustrate, if you know, the shadow'd fate.

A team of twenty geese, (a snow-white train!)
 Fed near the limpid lake with golden grain,
 Amuse my pensive hours. The bird of Jove
 Fierce from his mountain-eyrie downward drove;
 Each fav'rite fowl he pounc'd with deathful sway,
 And back triumphant wing'd his airy way.
 My pitying eyes effus'd a plenteous stream
 To view their death thus imag'd in a dream:
 With tender sympathy to sooth my soul,
 A troop of matrons, fancy-form'd, condolè.
 But whilst with grief and rage my bosom burn'd,
 Sudden the tyrant of the skies return'd:
 Perch'd on the battlements he thus began,
 (In form an eagle, but in voice a man.)
 O queen! no vulgar vision of the sky
 I come, prophetic of approaching joy:
 View in this plummy form thy victor lord;
 The geese (a glutton race) by thee deplor'd,
 Portend the suitors fated to my sword.
 This said, the pleasing feather'd omen ceas'd.
 When from the downy bands of sleep releas'd,
 Fast by the limpid lake my swan-like train
 I found, insatiate of the golden grain.

The vision self-explain'd (the chief replies.)
 Sincere reveals the sanction of the skies:

Ulysses speaks his own return decreed;
And by his sword the suitors sure to bleed.

Hard is the task, and rare, the queen rejoin'd,
Impending destinies in dreams to find:

Immur'd within the silent bow'r of Sleep,
Two portals firm the various phantoms keep:

Of iv'ry one; whence flit to mock the brain,
Of wing'd lies a light fantastic train:

The gate oppos'd pellucid valves adorn,
And columns fair incas'd with polish'd horn:

Where images of truth for passage wait,
With visions manifest of future fate.

Not to this troop, I fear, that phantom soar'd,
Which spoke Ulysses to his realm restor'd;

Delusive semblance!—But my remnant life
Heav'n shall determine in a gameful strife:

With that fam'd bow Ulysses taught to bend,
For me the rival archers shall contend.

As on the list'd field he us'd to place

Six beams, oppos'd to six in equal space:

Elanc'd a-far by his unerring art,

Sure thro' six circlets flew the whizzing dart.

So, when the sun restores the purple day,

Their strength and skill the suitors shall assay:

To him the spousal honour is decreed,

Who thro' the rings directs the feather'd reed.

Torn from these walls (where long the kinder pow'rs

With pomp and joy have wing'd my youthful hours!)

On this poor breast no dawn of bliss shall beam;

The pleasure past supplies a copious theme

For many a dreary thought, and many a doleful dream!

Propose the sportive lot, the chief replies,
Nor dread to name yourself the bowyer's prize:
Ulysses will surprize th' unfinish'd game
Avow'd, and falsify the suitor's claim.

To whom with grace serene the queen rejoin'd:
In all thy speech what pleasing force I find!
O'er my suspended woe thy words prevail,
I part reluctant from the pleasing tale.
But heav'n that knows what all terrestrials need,
Repose to night, and toil to day decreed:
Grateful vicissitude! Yet me withdrawn,
Wakeful to weep and watch the tardy dawn
Establish'd use enjoins; to rest and joy
Estrang'd, since dear Ulysses sail'd to Troy!
Mean-time instructed is the menial tribe
Your couch to fashion as yourself prescribe.

Thus affable, her bow'r the queen ascends;
The sov'reign step a beauteous train attends:
There imag'd to her soul Ulysses rose;
Down her pale cheek new-streaming sorrow flows:
'Till soft oblivious shade Minerva spread,
And o'er her eyes ambrosial slumber shed.

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THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XX.

THE ARGUMENT.

WHILE Ulysses lies in the vestibule of the palace, he is witness to the disorders of the women. Minerva comforts him and casts him asleep. At his awaking he desires a favourable sign from Jupiter, which is granted. The feast of Apollo is celebrated by the people, and the suitors banquet in the palace. Telemachus exerts his authority amongst them, notwithstanding which, Ulysses is insulted by Ctesippus, and the rest continue in their excesses. Strange prodigies are seen by Theoclymenus the augur, who explains them to the destruction of the wooers.

AN ample hide divine Ulysses spread,
And form'd of fleecy skins his humble bed:
(The remnants of the spoil the suitor-crowd
In festival devour'd, and victims vow'd.)
Then o'er the chief, Eurynome the chaste
With duteous care a downy carpet cast:
With dire revenge his thoughtful bosom glows,
And ruminating wrath, he scorns repose.
As thus pavilion'd in the porch he lay,
Scenes of lewd loves his wakeful eyes survey.

Whilst to nocturnal joys impure, repair
 With wanton glee, the prostituted fair.
 His heart with rage this new dishonour stung,
 Wav'ring his thoughts in dubious balance hung;
 Or, instant should he quench the guilty flame
 With their own blood, and intercept the shame;
 Or to their lust indulge a last embrace,
 And let the peers consummate the disgrace?
 Round his swol'n heart the murm'rous fury rowls;
 As o'er her young the mother-mastiff growls,
 And bays the stranger groom: so wrath compest
 Recoiling, mutter'd thunder in his breast.
 Poor suff'ring heart! he cry'd, support the pain
 Of wounded honour, and thy rage restrain.
 Not fiercer woes thy fortitude cou'd foil,
 When the brave partners of thy ten years toil
 Dire Polypheme devour'd: I then was freed
 By patient prudence, from the death decreed.

Thus anchor'd safe on reason's peaceful coast,
 Tempests of wrath his soul no longer tost;
 Restless his body rolls, to rage resign'd:
 As one who long with pale-ey'd famine pin'd,
 The fav'ry cates on glowing embers cast
 Incessant turns, impatient for repast:
 Ulysses so, from side to side devolv'd,
 In self-debate the suitors doom resolv'd.
 When in the form of mortal nymph array'd,
 From heav'n descends the Jove-born martial maid;
 And hov'ring o'er his head in view confess'd,
 The Goddess thus her fav'rite care address'd,

Oh thou, of mortals most inur'd to woes!
 Why rowl those eyes unfriended of repose?
 Beneath thy palace-roof forget thy care;
 Blest in thy queen! blest in thy blooming heir!
 Whom, to the Gods when suppliant fathers bow,
 They name the standard of their dearest vow.
 Just is thy kind reproach (the chief rejoin'd)
 Deeds full of fate distract my various mind,
 In contemplation rapt. This hostile crew
 What single arm hath prowess to subdue?
 Or if by Jove's, and thy auxiliar aid,
 They're doom'd to bleed; O say, coelestial maid:
 Where shall Ulysses shun, or how sustain,
 Nations embattel'd to revenge the slain?

Oh impotence of faith! Minerva cries,
 If man on frail unknowing man relies,
 Doubt you the Gods? Lo Pallas' self descends,
 Inspires thy counsels, and thy toils attends.
 In me affianc'd, fortify thy breast,
 Tho' myriads leagu'd thy rightful claim contest;
 My sure divinity shall bear the shield,
 And edge thy sword to reap the glorious field.
 Now, pay the debt to craving nature due,
 Her faded pow'rs with balmy rest renew.
 She ceas'd: Ambrosial slumbers seal his eyes;
 His care dissolves in visionary joys:
 The Goddess pleas'd, regains her natal skies.
 Not so the queen; The downy bands of sleep
 By grief relax'd, she wak'd again to sleep
 A gloomy pause ensu'd of dumb despair;
 Then thus her fate invok'd, with fervent pray'r.

Diana! speed thy deathful ebon dart,
 And cure the pangs of this convulsive heart.
 Snatch me, ye whirlwinds! far from human race,
 Tost thro' the void, illimitable space:
 Or if dismounted from the rapid cloud,
 Me with his whelming wave let ocean shroud!
 So, Pandarus, thy hopes, three orphan-fair
 Were doom'd to wander thro' the devious air;
 Thyself untimely and thy consort dy'd,
 But four coelestials both your cares supply'd.
 Venus in tender delicacy rears
 With honey, milk, and wine, their infant years:
 Imperial Juno to their youth assign'd
 A form majestic, and sagacious mind:
 With shapely growth Diana grac'd their bloom;
 And Pallas taught the texture of the loom.
 But whilst to learn their lots in nuptial love,
 Bright Cytherea fought the bow'r of Jove;
 (The God supreme, to whose eternal eye
 The registers of fate expanded lie)
 Wing'd harpies snatch'd th' unguarded charge away,
 And to the furies bore a grateful prey.
 Be such my lot! Or thou Diana speed
 Thy shaft, and send me joyful to the dead:
 To seek my lord among the warrior-train,
 Ere second vows my bridal faith profane.
 When woes the waking sense alone assail,
 Whilst night extends her soft oblivious veil,
 Of other wretches care the torture ends:
 No truce the warfare of my heart suspends!

The night renews the day-distracting theme,
And airy terrors fable ev'ry dream.

The last alone a kind illusion wrought,
And to my bed my lov'd Ulysses brought,
A manly bloom, and each majestic grace
As when for Troy he left my fond embrace:
Each raptures in my beating bosom rise,
I deem it sure a vision of the skies.

Thus, whilst Aurora mounts her purple throne,
Audible laments she breathes her moan:

The sounds assault Ulysses' wakeful ear;
Mis-judging of the cause, a sudden fear
At his arrival known, the chief alarms;
He thinks the queen is rushing to his arms.
Springing from his couch, with active haste
The fleece and carpet in the dome he plac'd:
The hide, without, imbib'd the morning air)
And thus the Gods invok'd, with ardent pray'r.

Jove, and ethereal thrones! with heav'n to friend
The long series of my woes shall end;
The human race now rising from repose,
Let one a blissful omen here disclose:
And to confirm my faith, propitious Jove!
Purchase the sanction of a sign above.

Whilst lowly thus the chief adoring bows,
The pitying God his guardian aid avows.
And from a saphire sky his thunder sounds:
With springing hope the hero's heart rebounds.
Then, with consummate joy to crown his pray'r,
The omen'd voice invades his ravish'd ear.

Beneath a pile that close the dome adjoin'd,
 Twelve female slaves the gift of Ceres grind;
 Task'd for the royal board to bolt the bran
 From the pure flour (the growth and strength of man)
 Discharging to the day the labour due,
 Now early to repose the rest withdrew;
 One maid, unequal to the task assign'd,
 Still turn'd the toilsome mill with anxious mind;
 And thus in bitterness of soul divin'd.

Father of Gods and men! whose thunders roll
 O'er the cerulean vault, and shake the pole;
 Whoe'er from heav'n has gain'd this rare ostent,
 (Of granted vows a certain signal sent)
 In this blest moment of accepted pray'r
 Piteous, regard a wretch consum'd with care!
 Instant, O Jove! confound the suitor train,
 For whom o'er toil'd I grind the golden grain:
 Far from this dome the lewd devourers cast,
 And be this festival decreed their last!

Big with their doom denounc'd in earth and sky,
 Ulysses' heart dilates with secret joy.
 Mean-time the menial train with unctuous wood
 Heap'd high the genial hearth, Vulcanian food:
 When, early dress'd, advanc'd the royal heir;
 With manly grasp he wav'd a martial spear,
 A radiant sabre grac'd his purple zone,
 And on his foot the golden sandal shone.
 His steps impetuous to the portal press'd;
 And Euryclea thus he there address'd.

Say thou, to whom my youth its nurture owes,
 Was care for due refection, and repose,

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fellow'd the stranger guest? or waits he griev'd,
 his age not honour'd, nor his wants reliev'd?
 promiscuous grace on all the queen confers;
 in woes bewilder'd, oft the wisest errs)
 The wordy vagrant to the dole aspires,
 and modest worth with noble scorn retires.

She thus : O cease that ever-honour'd name
 to blemish now; it ill deserves your blame.
 A bowl of gen'rous wine suffic'd the guest;
 in vain the queen the night-refection prest;
 for wou'd he court repose in downy state,
 helpless'd, abandon'd to the rage of fate!
 A hide beneath the portico was spread,
 and fleecy skins compos'd an humble bed:
 a downy carpet cast with duteous care,
 secur'd him from the keen nocturnal air.

His cornel jav'lin pois'd, with regal port,
 To the sage Greeks conven'd in Themis' court,
 North-issuing from the dome the prince repair'd:
 Two dogs of chace, a lion-hearted guard,
 behind him sow'rly stalk'd. Without delay
 The dame divides the labour of the day;
 Thus urging to the toil the menial train.
 What marks of luxury the marble stain!
 Its wonted lustre let the floor regain;
 The seats with purple cloathe in order due;
 and let th' absterfive sponge the board renew:
 let some refresh the vase's sullied mold;
 some bid the goblets boast their native gold:
 some to the spring, with each a jar, repair,
 and copious waters pure for bathing bear:

Dispatch! for soon the suitors will assay
The lunar feast-rites to the God of day.

She said; with duteous haste a bevy fair
Of twenty virgins to the spring repair:
With varied toils the rest adorn the dome.
Magnificent, and blithe, the suitors come.
Some wield the sounding ax; the dodder'd oaks
Divide, obedient to the forceful strokes.
Soon from the fount, with each a brimming urn,
(Eumaeus in their train) the maids return.
Three porkers for the feast, all brawny chin'd,
He brought; the choicest of the tusky kind:
In lodgments first secure his care he view'd,
Then to the king his friendly speech renew'd:
Now say sincere, my guest! the suitor train
Still treat thy worth with lordly dull disdain;
Or speaks their deed a bounteous mind humane?

Some pitying God (Ulysses sad reply'd)
With vollied vengeance blast their tow'ring pride!
No conscious blush, no sense of right restrains
The tides of lust that swell their boiling veins:
From vice to vice their appetites are tost,
All cheaply fated at another's cost!

While thus the chief his woes indignant told,
Melanthius, master of the bearded fold,
The goodliest goats of all the royal herd
Spontaneous to the suitors' feast preferr'd:
Two grooms assistant bore the victims bound;
With quav'ring cries the vaulted roofs resound:
And to the chief austere, aloud began
The wretch unfriendly to the race of man.

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Here, vagrant, still? offensive to my lords!
 Blows have more energy than airy words;
 Those arguments I'll use: nor conscious shame,
 Nor threats, thy bold intrusion will reclaim.
 On this high feast the meanest vulgar boast
 A plenteous board! hence! seek another host!
 Rejoinder to the churl the king disdain'd,
 But shook his head, and rising wrath restrain'd.
 From Cephalenia crosses the surgy main
 Philaetius late arriv'd, a faithful swain.
 A steer ungrateful to the bull's embrace,
 And goats he brought, the pride of all their race;
 Imported in a shallop not his own:
 The dome re-echo'd to their mingled moan.
 Strait to the guardian of the bristly kind
 He thus began, benevolent of mind.
 What guest is he, of such majestic air?
 His lineage and paternal clime declare:
 Dim thro' th' eclipse of fate, the rays divine
 Of sov'reign state with faded splendor shine.
 If monarchs by the Gods are plung'd in woe,
 To what abyss are we foredoom'd to go!
 Then affable he thus the chief address'd,
 Whilst with pathetic warmth his hand he press'd.
 Stranger! may fate a milder aspect shew,
 And spin thy future with a whiter clue!
 O love! for ever deaf to human cries;
 The tyrant, not the father of the skies!
 In spiteous of the race thy will began,
 The fool of fate, thy manufacture, man,

With penury, contempt, repulse, and care,
 The galling load of life is doom'd to bear.
 Ulysses from his state a wand'rer still,
 Upbraids thy pow'r, thy wisdom, or thy will:
 O monarch ever dear!—— O man of woe!——
 Fresh flow my tears, and shall for ever flow!
 Like thee, poor stranger guest, deny'd his home!
 Like thee, in rags obscene decreed to roam?
 Or haply perish'd on some distant coast,
 In Stygian gloom he glides a pensive ghost!
 O, grateful for the good his bounty gave,
 I'll grieve, 'till sorrow sink me to the grave!
 His kind protecting hand my youth preferr'd,
 The regent of his Cephallenian herd:
 With vast increase beneath my care it spreads,
 A stately breed! and blackens far the meads.
 Constrain'd, the choicest beeves I thence import,
 To cram these cormorants that crowd his court:
 Who in partition seek his realms to share;
 Nor human right, nor wrath divine reverse.
 Since here resolv'd oppressive these reside,
 Contending doubts my anxious heart divide:
 Now, to some foreign clime inclin'd to fly,
 And with the royal herd protection buy:
 Then, happier thoughts return the nodding scale,
 Light mounts despair, alternate hopes prevail:
 In op'ning prospects of ideal joy,
 My king returns; the proud usurpers die.

To whom the chief: in thy capacious mind
 Since daring zeal with cool debate is join'd;

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Attend a deed already ripe in fate:
 Attest, oh Jove, the truth I now relate!
 This sacred truth attest each genial pow'r,
 Who blest the board, and guard this friendly bow'r!
 Before thou quit the dome (nor long delay)
 Thy wish produc'd in act, with pleas'd survey,
 Thy wond'ring eyes shall view: his rightful reign
 By arms avow'd Ulysses shall regain,
 And to the shades devote the suitor-train.

O Jove supreme, the raptur'd swain replies,
 With deeds consummate soon the promis'd joys!
 These aged nerves with new-born vigour strung,
 In that blest cause shou'd emulate the young——
 Assents Eumaeus to the pray'r address;
 And equal ardors fire his loyal breast.

Mean-time the suitors urge the prince's fate,
 And deathful arts employ the dire debate:
 When in his airy tour, the bird of Jove
 Truſs'd with his sinewy pounce a trembling dove;
 Sinister to their hope! This omen ey'd
 Amphinomus, who thus presaging cry'd.

The Gods from force and fraud the prince defend;
 O peers! the sanguinary scheme suspend:
 Your future thought let fable fate employ;
 And give the present hour to genial joy.

From council strait th' assenting peerage ceas'd,
 And in the dome prepar'd the genial feast.
 Dis-rob'd, their vests apart in order lay,
 Then all with speed succinct the victims slay:
 With sheep and shaggy goats the porkers bled,
 And the proud steer was on the marble spread.

With fire prepar'd they deal the morsels round,
 Wine rosy-bright the brimming goblets crown'd,
 By sage Eumæus born: the purple tide
 Melanthius from an ample jar supply'd:
 High canisters of bread Philætiæ plac'd;
 And eager all devour the rich repast.
 Dispos'd apart, Ulysses shares the treat!
 A trivet-table, and ignobler seat,
 The prince appoints; but to his fire assigns
 The tasteful inwards, and nectareous wines.
 Partake my guest, he cry'd, without controul
 The social feast, and drain the cheering bowl:
 Dread not the railer's laugh, nor ruffian's rage;
 No vulgar roof protects thy honour'd age;
 This dome a refuge to thy wrongs shall be,
 From my great fire too soon devolv'd to me!
 Your violence and scorn, ye suitors cease,
 Lest arms avenge the violated peace.

Aw'd by the prince, so haughty, brave, and young,
 Rage gnaw'd the lip, amazement chain'd the tongue.
 Be patient, peers! at length Antinous cries;
 The threats of vain imperious youth despise:
 Wou'd Jove permit the meditated blow,
 That stream of eloquence shou'd cease to flow.

Without reply vouchsaf'd, Antinous ceas'd:
 Mean-while the pomp of festival increas'd:
 By heralds rank'd, in marshall'd order move
 The city-tribes, to pleas'd Apollo's grove:
 Beneath the verdure of which awful shade,
 The lunar hecatomb they grateful laid;
 Partook the sacred feast, and ritual honours paid.

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But the rich banquet in the dome prepar'd,
 (An humble side-board set) Ulysses shar'd.
 Observant of the prince's high behest,
 His menial train attend the stranger-guest;
 Whom Pallas with unpar'd'ning fury fir'd,
 By lordly pride and keen reproach inspir'd.
 A Samian peer, more studious than the rest
 Of vice, who teem'd with many a dead-born jest;
 And urg'd, for title to a consort queen,
 Unnumber'd acres arable and green;
 (Ctesippus nam'd) this lord Ulysses ey'd,
 And thus burst out, imposthumate with pride.

The sentence I propose, ye peers, attend:
 Since due regard must wait the prince's friend,
 Let each a token of esteem bestow:

This gift acquits the dear respect I owe;
 With which he nobly may discharge his seat,
 And pay the menials for the master's treat.

He said; and of the steer before him plac'd,
 That sinewy fragment at Ulysses cast,
 Where to the pastern-bone by nerves combin'd,
 The well-horn'd foot indissolubly join'd;
 Which whizzing high, the wall unseemly sign'd.
 The chief indignant grins a ghastly smile;
 Revenge and scorn within his bosom boil:
 When thus the prince with pious rage inflam'd:
 And not th' inglorious wound thy malice aim'd
 Fall'n guiltless of the mark, my certain spear
 Had made thee buy the brutal triumph dear:
 Nor shou'd thy sire a queen his daughter boast,
 The suitor now had vanish'd in a ghost:

No more, ye lewd compeers, with lawless pow'r
 Invade my dome, my herds and flocks devour:
 For genuine worth, of age mature to know,
 My grape shall redden, and my harvest grow.
 Or if each other's wrongs ye still support,
 With rapes and riot to profane my court;
 What single arm with numbers can contend?
 On me let all your lifted swords descend,
 And with my life such vile dishonours end.

A long cessation of discourse ensu'd,
 By gentler Agelaus thus renew'd.

A just reproof, ye peers! your rage restrain
 From the protected guest, and menial train:
 And prince! to stop the source of future ill,
 Assent yourself, and gain the royal will.
 Whilst hope prevail'd to see your fire restor'd,
 Of right the queen refus'd a second lord:
 But who so vain of faith, so blind to fate,
 To think he still survives to claim the state?
 Now press the sov'reign dame with warm desire
 To wed, as wealth or worth her choice inspire:
 The lord selected to the nuptial joys,
 Far hence will lead the long-contended prize:
 Whilst in paternal pomp, with plenty blest,
 You reign, of this imperial dome possesst.

Sage and serene Telemachus replies;
 By him at whose behest the thunder flies!
 And by the name on earth I most revere,
 By great Ulysses and his woes I swear!
 (Who never must review his dear domain;
 Inroll'd, perhaps, in Pluto's dreary train.)

Whene'er her choice the royal dame avows,
 My bridal gifts shall load the future spouse:
 But from this dome my parent-queen to chase! —
 From me, ye Gods! avert such dire disgrace.

But Pallas clouds with intellectual gloom
 The suitors souls, insensate of their doom!
 A mirthful phrenzy seiz'd the fated crowd;
 The roofs resound with causeless laughter loud:
 Floating in gore, portentous to survey!
 In each discolour'd vase the viands lay:
 Then down each cheek the tears spontaneous flow,
 And sudden sighs precede approaching woe,
 In vision rap'd; the * Hyperæian seer
 Up-rose, and thus divin'd the vengeance near.

O race to death devote! with Stygian shade
 Each destin'd peer impending fates invade:
 With tears your wan distorted cheeks are drown'd;
 With sanguine drops the walls are rubied round:
 Thick swarms the spacious hall with howling ghosts,
 To people Orcus, and the burning coasts!
 Nor gives the sun his golden orb to roll,
 But universal night usurps the pole!

Yet warn'd in vain, with laughter loud clate
 The peers reproach the sure divine of fate;
 And thus Eurymachus: The dotard's mind
 To ev'ry sense is lost, to reason blind:
 Swift from the dome conduct the slave away;
 Let him in open air behold the day.

Tax not, (the heav'n-illumin'd seer rejoin'd)
 Of rage, or folly, my prophetic mind,

* Theoclymenus.

No clouds of error dim th' etherial rays,
 Her equal pow'r each faithful sense obeys.
 Unguided hence my trembling steps I bend,
 Far hence, before yon' hov'ring deaths descend;
 Lest the ripe harvest of revenge begun,
 I share the doom ye suitors cannot shun.

This said, to sage Piraeus sped the seer,
 His honour'd host, a welcome inmate there.
 O'er the protracted feast the suitors sit,
 And aim to wound the prince with pointless wit:
 Cries one, with scornful leer and mimic voice,
 Thy charity we praise, but not thy choice;
 Why such profusion of indulgence shown
 To this poor, tim'rous, toil-detesting drone?
 That other feeds on planetary schemes,
 And pays his host with hideous noon-day dreams.
 But, prince! for once at least believe a friend,
 To some Sicilian mart these courtiers send,
 Where, if they yield their freight across the main,
 Dear sell the slaves! demand no greater gain.

Thus jovial they; but nought the prince replies;
 Full on his fire he rowl'd his ardent eyes;
 Impatient strait to flesh his virgin-sword,
 From the wise chief he waits the deathful word.
 Nigh in her bright alcove, the pensive queen
 To see the circle fat, of all unseen.
 Sated at length they rise, and bid prepare
 An eve-repast, with equal cost and care:
 But vengeful Pallas with preventing speed
 A feast proportion'd to their crimes decreed;
 A feast of death! the feasters doom'd to bleed!

T H E

O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XXI.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The bending of Ulysses' Bow.

PENELOPE, to put an end to the solicitation of the suitors, proposes to marry the person who should first bend the bow of Ulysses, and shoot through the ringlets. After their attempts have prov'd ineffectual, Ulysses taking Eumæus and Philætiüs apart, discovers himself to them; then returning, desires leave to try his strength at the bow, which, though refus'd with indignation by the suitors, Penelope and Telemachus cause it to be deliver'd to his hands. He bends it immediately, and shoots through all the rings. Jupiter in the same instant thunders from heav'n; Ulysses accepts the omen, and gives a sign to Telemachus, who stands ready arm'd at his side.

AND Pallas now, to raise the rivals fires,
With her own art Penelope inspires:
Who now can bend Ulysses' bow, and wing
The well-aim'd arrow thro' the distant ring,
Shall end the strife, and win th' imperial dame;
And discord and black death await the game!

The prudent queen the lofty stair ascends,
 At distance due a virgin-train attends;
 A brazen key she held, the handle turn'd,
 With steel and polish'd elephant adorn'd:
 Swift to the inmost room she bent her way,
 Where safe repos'd the royal treasures lay;
 There shone high-heap'd the labour'd brass and ore,
 And there the bow which great Ulysses bore,
 And there the quiver where now guiltless slept
 Those winged deaths that many a matron wept.

This gift, long since when Sparta's shores he trod,
 On young Ulysses Iphitus bestow'd:
 Beneath Orsilochnus his roof they meet;
 One loss was private, one a public debt:
 Messena's state from Ithaca detains
 Three hundred sheep, and all the shepherd swains;
 And to the youthful prince to urge the laws,
 The king and elders trust their common cause.
 But Iphitus employ'd on other cares,
 Search'd the wide country for his wand'ring mares,
 And mules, the strongest of the lab'ring kind;
 Hapless to search! more hapless still to find!
 For journeying on to Hercules at length,
 The lawless wretch, the man of brutal strength,
 Deaf to heav'n's voice, the social rite transgress;
 And for theauteous mares destroy'd his guest.
 He gave the bow; and on Ulysses' part
 Receiv'd a pointed sword and missile dart:
 Of luckless friendship on a foreign shore
 Their first, last pledges! for they met no more.

the bow, bequeath'd by this unhappy hand,
 which bore not from his native land,
 nor in the front of battle taught to bend,
 but kept, in dear memorial of his friend.
 Now gently winding up the fair ascent,
 many an easy step, the matron went;
 then o'er the pavement glides with grace divine,
 (With polish'd oak the level pavements shine)
 The folding gates a dazzling light display'd,
 With pomp of various architrave o'erlay'd.
 The bolt, obedient to the silken string,
 forsakes the staple as she pulls the ring;
 The wards respondent to the key turn round;
 The bars fall back; the flying valves resound;
 Loud as a bull makes hill and valley ring,
 It roar'd the lock when it releas'd the spring.
 She moves majestic thro' the wealthy room,
 Where treasur'd garments cast a rich perfume;
 There from the column where aloft it hung,
 Reach'd, in its splendid case, the bow unstrung:
 Across her knees she lay'd the well-known bow,
 And pensive sat, and tears began to flow.
 To full satiety of grief she mourns,
 Then silent, to the joyous hall returns,
 To the proud suitors bears in pensive state
 The unbended bow, and arrows wing'd with fate.
 Behind, her train the polish'd coffer brings,
 Which held th' alternate brass and silver rings,
 All in the portal the chaste queen appears,
 And with her veil conceals the coming tears:

On either side awaits a virgin fair;
While thus the matron, with majestic air.

Say you, whom these forbidden walls inclose,
For whom my victims bleed, my vintage flows;
If these neglected, faded charms can move?
Or is it but a vain pretence, you love?
If I the prize, if me you seek to wife,
Hear the conditions, and commence the strife.
Who first Ulysses' wond'rous bow shall bend,
And thro' twelve ringlets the fleet arrow send,
Him will I follow, and forsake my home,
For him forsake this lov'd, this wealthy dome,
Long, long the scene of all my past delight,
And still to last, the vision of my night!

Graceful she said, and bade Eumæus show
The rival-peers the ringlets and the bow.
From his full eyes the tears unbidden spring,
Touch'd at the dear memorials of his king.
Philaetius too relents, but secret shed
The tender drops. Antinous saw, and said.

Hence to your fields, ye rustics! hence away,
Nor stain with grief the pleasures of the day;
Nor to the royal heart recall in vain
The sad remembrance of a perish'd man.
Enough her precious tears already flow——
Or share the feast with due respect, or go
To weep abroad, and leave to us the bow:
No vulgar task! Ill suits this courtly crew
That stubborn horn which brave Ulysses drew.
I well remember (for I gaz'd him o'er
While yet a child) what majesty he bore!

and still (all infant as I was) retain
 the port, the strength, the grandeur of the man!
 He said, but in his soul fond joys arise,
 and his proud hopes already win the prize.
 To speed the flying shaft thro' ev'ry ring,
 Wretch! is not thine: the arrows of the king
 shall end those hopes, and fate is on the wing!
 Then thus Telemachus. Some God I find
 With pleasing phrenzy has possess'd my mind;
 When a lov'd mother threatens to depart,
 Why with this ill-tim'd gladness leaps my heart?
 Come then, ye suitors! and dispute a prize
 rather than all th' Achaian state supplies,
 Than all proud Argos, or Mycena knows,
 Than all our isles or continents enclose:
 A woman matchless, and almost divine,
 fit for the praise of ev'ry tongue but mine.
 No more excuses then, no more delay;
 haste to the tryal — Lo! I lead the way.
 Too may try, and if this arm can wing
 The feather'd arrow thro' the destin'd ring,
 Then if no happy'r knight the conquest boast,
 shall not sorrow for a mother lost;
 but blest in her, possess these arms alone,
 heir of my father's strength, as well as throne.
 He spoke; then rising, his broad sword unbound,
 cast his purple garment on the ground.
 A trench he open'd; in a line he plac'd
 The level axes, and the points made fast.
 His perfect skill the wond'ring gazers ey'd,
 The game as yet unseen, as yet untry'd.)

Then, with a manly pace, he took his stand;
 And grasp'd the bow, and twang'd it in his hand.
 Three times, with beating heart, he made essay;
 Three times, unequal to the task gave way:
 A modest boldness on his cheek appear'd;
 And thrice he hop'd, and thrice again he fear'd.
 The fourth had drawn it. The great sire with joy
 Beheld, but with a sign forbade the boy.
 His ardour strait th' obedient prince suppress,
 And artful, thus the suitor-train address.

Oh lay the cause on youth yet immature!
 (For heav'n forbid, such weakness should endure)
 How shall this arm, unequal to the bow,
 Retort an insult, or repel a foe?
 But you! whom heav'n with better nerves has blest,
 Accept the tryal, and the prize contest.

He cast the bow before him, and apart
 Against the polish'd quiver propt the dart.
 Resuming then his seat, Epithens' son
 The bold Antinous to the rest begun.
 " From where the goblet first begins to flow,
 " From right to left, in order take the bow;
 " And prove your several strengths—The princes hear
 And first Leoides, blameless priest, appear'd:
 The eldest born of Oenops' noble race,
 Who next the goblet held his holy place:
 He, only he of all the suitor-throng,
 Their deeds detested, and abjur'd the wrong.
 With tender hands the stubborn horn he strains,
 The stubborn horn resisted all his pains!

Already in despair he gives it o'er;
 Take it who will, he cries, I strive no more.
 What num'rous deaths attend this fatal bow?
 What souls and spirits shall it send below?
 Better indeed to die, and fairly give
 Nature her debt, than disappointed live,
 With each new sun to some new hope a prey,
 Yet still to-morrow falser than to-day.
 How long in vain Penelope we fought?
 This bow shall ease us of that idle thought,
 And send us with some humbler wife to live,
 Whom gold shall gain, or destiny shall give.

Thus speaking, on the floor the bow he plac'd,
 (With rich inlay the various floor was grac'd)
 At distance far the feather'd shaft he throws,
 And to the seat returns from whence he rose.

To him Antinous thus with fury said,
 What words ill-omen'd from thy lips have fled?
 Thy coward function ever is in fear;
 Those arms are dreadful which thou canst not bear.
 Why should this bow be fatal to the brave?
 Because the priest is born a peaceful slave.
 Mark then what others can — He ended there,
 And bade Melanthius a vast pile prepare;
 He gives it instant flame: then fast beside
 Spreads o'er an ample board a bullock's hide.
 With melted lard they soak the weapon o'er,
 Chase ev'ry knot, and supple ev'ry pore.
 Vain all their art, and all their strength as vain;
 The bow inflexible resists their pain.

The force of great Eurymachus alone
 And bold Antinous, yet untry'd, unknown:
 Those only now remain'd; but those confess
 Of all the train, the mightiest and the best.

Then from the hall, and from the noisy crew,
 The masters of the herd and flock withdrew.
 The king observes them: he the hall forsakes,
 And, past the limits of the court, o'ertakes.
 Then thus with accent mild Ulysses spoke:
 Ye faithful guardians of the herd and flock!
 Shall I the secret of my breast conceal,
 Or (as my soul now dictates) shall I tell?
 Say, shou'd some fav'ring God restore again
 The lost Ulysses to his native reign?
 How beat your hearts? what aid wou'd you afford?
 To the proud suitors, or your ancient lord?

Phileti^{us} thus. Oh were thy word not vain!
 Wou'd mighty Jove restore that man again!
 These aged sinews with new vigor strung
 In his blest cause shou'd emulate the young.
 With equal vows Eumaeus too implor'd
 Each pow'r above, with wishes for his lord.

He saw their secret souls, and thus began:
 Those vows the Gods accord: Behold the man!
 Your own Ulysses! twice ten years detain'd
 By woes and wand'rings from this hapless land:
 At length he comes; but comes despis'd, unknown,
 And finding faithful, you, and you alone.
 All else have cast him from their very thought,
 Ev'n in their wishes, and their pray'rs, forgot!

Fear then, my friends! If Jove this arm succeed,
 And give yon' impious revellers to bleed,
 My care shall be, to bless your future lives
 With large possessions and with faithful wives;
 Fast by my palace shall your domes ascend,
 And each on young Telemachus attend,
 And each be call'd his brother, and my friend.
 To give you firmer faith, now trust your eye:
 Lo! the broad scar indented on my thigh,
 When with Autolycus's sons, of yore,
 On Parnass' top I chac'd the tusk'd boar.

His ragged vest then drawn aside disclos'd
 The sign conspicuous, and the scar expos'd:
 Eager they view'd; with joy they stood amaz'd;
 With tear-ful eyes o'er all their master gaz'd:
 Around his neck their longing arms they cast,
 His head, his shoulders, and his knees embrac'd:
 Tears followed tears; no word was in their pow'r,
 In solemn silence fell the kindly show'r.
 The king too weeps, the king too grasps their hands,
 And moveless, as a marble fountain, stands.

Thus had their joy wept down the setting sun,
 But first the wise-man ceas'd, and thus begun.
 Enough——on other cares your thought employ,
 For danger waits on all untimely joy.
 Full many foes, and fierce, observe us near:
 One may betray, and yonder walls may hear.
 Re-enter then, not all at once, but stay
 Some moments you, and let me lead the way.
 To me, neglected as I am, I know
 The haughty suitors will deny the bow

But thou, Eumæus, as 'tis born away,
 Thy master's weapon to his hand convey.
 At ev'ry portal let some matron wait,
 And each lock fast the well-compacted gate:
 Close let them keep, whate'er invades their ear;
 Tho' arms, or shouts, or dying groans they hear.
 To thy strict charge, Philætiüs! we consign
 The court's main gate: To guard that pass be thine.

This said, he first return'd: the faithful swains
 At distance follow, as their king ordains.
 Before the flame Eurymachus now stands,
 And turns the bow, and chafes it with his hands:
 Still the tough bow unmov'd. The lofty man
 Sigh'd from his mighty soul, and thus began:

I mourn the common cause; for, oh my friends!
 On me, on all, what grief, what shame attends?
 Not the lost nuptials can affect me more,
 (For Greece has beauteous dames on ev'ry shore)
 But baffled thus! confess'd so far below
 Ulysses' strength, as not to bend his bow!
 How shall all ages our attempt deride?
 Our weakness scorn? Antinous thus reply'd.

Not so, Eurymachus: That no man draws
 The wond'rous bow, attend another cause.
 Sacred to Phoebus is the solemn day,
 Which thoughtless we in games would waste away:
 'Till the next dawn this ill-tim'd strife forgoe,
 And here leave fix'd the ringlets in a rowe.
 Now bid the few'r approach, and let us join
 In due libations, and in rites divine,

To end our night: before the day shall spring,
 The choicest off'rings let Melanthius bring;
 Let then to Phoebus' name the fatted thighs
 Feed the rich smokes, high-curling to the skies.
 So shall the patron of these arts bestow
 For his the gift) the skill to bend the bow.

They heard well-pleas'd: the ready heralds bring
 The cleansing waters from the limpid spring:
 The goblet high with rosy wine they crown'd,
 In order circling to the peers around.
 That right compleat, up-rose the thoughtful man,
 And thus his meditated scheme began.

If what I ask your noble minds approve,
 Ye peers and rivals in the royal love!
 Chief, if it hurt not great Antinous ear,
 Whose sage decision I with wonder hear)
 And if Eurymachus the motion please;
 Give heav'n this day, and rest the bow in peace.
 To-morrow let your arms dispute the prize,
 And take it He, the favour'd of the skies!
 But since till then, this tryal you delay,
 Turnst it one moment to my hands to-day:
 I'd fain would I prove, before your judging eyes,
 What once I was, whom wretched you despise;
 If yet this arm its antient force retain;
 Or if my woes (a long-continu'd train)
 And wants and insults make me less than man?

Rage flash'd in light'ning from the suitors eyes,
 Let mix'd with terror at the bold emprise.
 Antinous then: O miserable guest!
 Is common sense quite banish'd from thy breast?

Suffic'd it not within the palace plac'd
 To sit distinguish'd, with our presence grac'd,
 Admitted here with princes to confer,
 A man unknown, a needy wanderer?
 To copious wine this insolence we owe,
 And much thy betters wine can overthrow.
 The great Eurytion when this frenzy stung,
 Pirithous' roofs with frantick riot rung;
 Boundless the Centaur rag'd; 'till one and all
 The heroes rose, and dragg'd him from the hall;
 His nose they shorten'd, and his ears they slit,
 And sent him sober home, with better wit.
 Hence with long war the double race was curst,
 Fatal to all, but to th' aggressor first.
 Such fate I prophecy our guest attends,
 If here this interdicted bow he bends:
 Nor shall these walls such insolence contain;
 The first fair wind transports him o'er the main;
 Where Echetus to death the guilty brings,
 (The worst of mortals, ev'n the worst of kings.)
 Better than that, if thou approve our cheer,
 Cease the mad strife, and share our bounty here.

To this the queen her just dislike exprest:
 'Tis impious, prince! to harm the stranger-guest,
 Base to insult who bears a suppliant's name,
 And some respect Telemachus may claim.
 What if th'immortals on the man bestow
 Sufficient strength to draw the mighty bow?
 Shall I, a queen, by rival chiefs ador'd,
 Accept a wand'ring stranger for my lord?

A hope so idle never touch'd his brain:
 Then ease your bosoms of a fear so vain.
 Far be he banish'd from this stately scene
 Who wrongs his princess with a thought so mean,
 O fair! and wisest of so fair a kind!
 (Respectful thus Eurymachus rejoin'd)
 Mov'd by no weak surmise, but sense of shame,
 We dread the all-arraigning voice of fame;
 We dread the censure of the meanest slave,
 The weakest woman: all can wrong the brave.
 "Behold what wretches to the bed pretend
 Of that brave chief whose bow they cou'd not bend!
 "In came a beggar of the strolling crew,
 "And did what all those princes could not do."
 Thus will the common voice our deed defame,
 And thus posterity upbraid our name.

To whom the queen. If fame engage your views,
 Forbear those acts which infamy pursues:
 Wrong and oppression no renown can raise;
 Know, friend! that virtue is the path to praise.
 The stature of our guest, his port, his face,
 Speak him descended from no vulgar race.
 To him the bow, as he desires, convey;
 And to his hand if Phoebus give the day,
 Hence, to reward his merit, he shall bear
 A two-edg'd faulchion and a shining spear,
 Embroider'd sandals, a rich cloak a vest,
 And safe conveyance to his port of rest.

O royal-mother! ever-honour'd name!
 Permit me (cries Telemachus) to claim

A son's just right. No Grecian prince but I
 Has pow'r this bow to grant, or to deny.
 Of all that Ithaca's rough hills contain,
 And all wide Elis' courser-breeding plain,
 To me alone my father's arms descend;
 And mine alone they are, to give or lend.
 Retire, oh queen! thy household task resume,
 Tend, with thy maids, the labours of the loom;
 The bow, the darts, and arms of chivalry,
 These cares to man belong, and most to me.

Mature beyond his years, the queen admir'd
 His sage reply, and with her train retir'd:
 There in her chamber as she sat apart,
 Revolv'd his words, and plac'd them in her heart.
 On her Ulysses then she fix'd her soul,
 Down her fair cheek the tears abundant roll,
 'Till gentle Pallas, piteous of her cries,
 In slumber clos'd her silver-streaming eyes.

Now thro' the press the bow Eumæus bore,
 And all was riot, noise, and wild uproar.
 Hold, lawless rustic! whither wilt thou go?
 To whom, insensate, dost thou bear the bow?
 Exil'd for this to some sequester'd den,
 Far from the sweet society of men,
 To thy own dogs a prey thou shalt be made;
 If heav'n and Phoebus lend the suitors aid.

Thus they. Aghast he laid the weapon down,
 But bold Telemachus thus urg'd him on.
 Proceed, false slave, and slight their empty words;
 What? hopes the fool to please so many lords?

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young as I am, thy prince's vengeful hand
 stretch'd forth in wrath, shall drive thee from the land.

Oh! could the vigor of this arm as well
 th' oppressive suitors from my walls expell!

Then what a shoal of lawless men should go
 to fill with tumult the dark courts below?

The suitors with a scornful smile survey
 the youth, indulging in the genial day.

Laertes, thus encourag'd, hastes to bring
 the strife-full bow, and gives it to the king.

Old Euryclea calling then aside,

hear what Telemachus enjoins (he cry'd)

at ev'ry portal let some matron wait,

and each lock fast the well-compacted gate;

and if unusual sounds invade their ear,

arms, or shouts, or dying groans they hear,

let none to call or issue forth presume,

but close attend the labours of the loom.

Her prompt obedience on his order waits;

as if in an instant were the palace gates.

At the same moment forth Philactius flies,

secures the court, and with a cable ties

the utmost gate. (the cable strongly wrought

of Byblos' reed, a ship from Egypt brought)

Then unperceiv'd and silent, at the board

his seat he takes, his eyes upon his lord.

And now his well-known bow the master bore,

turn'd on all sides, and view'd it o'er and o'er;

lest time or worms had done the weapon wrong,

his owner absent, and untry'd so long.

While some deriding—How he turns the bow!
 Some other like it sure the man must know,
 Or else wou'd copy; or in bows he deals;
 Perhaps he makes them, or perhaps he steals.—
 Heav'n to this wretch (another cry'd) be kind!
 And blest, in all to which he stands inclin'd,
 With such good fortune as he now shall find.

Headless he heard them; but disdain'd reply;
 The bow perusing with exactest eye.
 Then, as some heav'nly minstrel, taught to sing
 High notes responsive to the trembling string,
 To some new strain when he adapts the lyre,
 Or the dumb lute refits with vocal wire,
 Relaxes, strains, and draws them to and fro;
 So the great master drew the mighty bow:
 And drew with ease. One hand aloft display'd
 The bending horns, and one the string essay'd.
 From his essaying hand the string let fly
 Twang'd short and sharp, like the shrill swallow's cry.
 A gen'ral horror ran thro' all the race,
 Sunk was each heart, and pale was ev'ry face.
 Signs from above ensu'd: th' unfolding sky
 In lightning burst; Jove thunder'd from on high.
 Fir'd at the call of heav'n's almighty lord,
 He snatch'd the shaft that glitter'd on the board:
 (Fast by, the rest lay sleeping in the sheath,
 But soon to fly the messengers of death.)

Now sitting as he was, the chord he drew,
 Thro' ev'ry ringlet levelling his view;
 Then notch'd the shaft, releast, and gave it wing;
 The whizzing arrow vanish'd from the string,
 Sung on direct, and threaded ev'ry ring.

The solid gate its fury scarcely bounds ;
 Pierc'd thro' and thro', the solid gate resounds.

Then to the prince. Nor have I wrought thee shame ;
 Nor err'd this hand unfaithful to its aim ;
 Nor prov'd the toil too hard ; nor have I lost
 That ancient vigour, once my pride and boast.
 Ill I deserv'd these haughty peers disdain ;
 Now let them comfort their dejected train,
 In sweet repast the present hour employ,
 Nor wait 'till ev'ning for the genial joy.
 Then to the lute's soft voice prolong the night,
 Music, the banquet's most refin'd delight.

He said ; then gave a nod ; and at the word
 Telemachus gird on his shining sword.
 Fall by his father's side he takes his stand ;
 The beamy jav'lin lightens in his hand.

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T H E O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XXII.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The Death of the Suitors.

ULYSSES begins the slaughter of the suitors by the death of Antinous. He declares himself, and lets fly his arrows at the rest. Telemachus assists, and brings arms for his father, himself, Eumaeus and Philaetius. Melanthius does the same for the wooers. Minerva encourages Ulysses in the shape of Mentor. The suitors are all slain, only Medon and Phemius are spar'd. Melanthius and the unfaithful servants are executed. The rest acknowledge their master with all demonstrations of joy.

THEN fierce the hero o'er the threshold strode;
Stript of his rags, he blaz'd out like a God.
Full in their face the lifted bow he bore,
And quiver'd deaths, a formidable store;
Before his feet the rattling show'r he threw,
And thus terrific, to the suitor crew,
One vent'rous game this hand has won to-day,
Another, princes! yet remains to play;
Another mark our arrow must attain.
Phoebus assist! nor be the labour vain.

Swift as the word the parting arrow sings,
 And bears thy fate, Antinous, on its wings:
 Wretch that he was, of unprophetic soul!
 High in his hands he rear'd the golden bowl;
 Ev'n then to drain it lengthen'd out his breath;
 Chang'd to the deep, the bitter draught of death:
 For fate who fear'd amidst a feastful band?
 And fate to numbers by a single hand.
 Full thro' his throat Ulysses' weapon past,
 And pierc'd the neck. He falls, and breathes his last.
 The tumbling goblet the wide floor o'erflows,
 A stream of gore burst spouting from his nose;
 Grim in convulsive agonies he sprawls:
 Before him spurn'd, the loaded table falls,
 And spreads the pavement with a mingled flood
 Of floating meats, and wine, and human blood.
 Amaz'd, confounded, as they saw him fall,
 Uprose the throngs tumultuous round the hall;
 O'er all the dome they cast a haggard eye,
 Each look'd for arms in vain; no arms were nigh:
 Aim'st thou at princes? (all amaz'd they said)
 Thy last of games unhappy hast thou play'd;
 Thy erring shaft has made our bravest bleed,
 And death, unlucky guest, attends thy deed.
 Vultures shall tear thee—Thus incens'd they spoke,
 While each to chance ascrib'd the wond'rous stroke,
 Blind as they were; for death ev'n now invades
 His destin'd prey, and wraps them all in shades.
 Then grimly frowning with a dreadful look,
 That wither'd all their hearts, Ulysses spoke.

Dogs, ye have had your day; ye fear'd no more
 Ulysses vengeful from the Trojan shore;
 While to your lust and spoil a guardless prey,
 Our house, our wealth, our helpless handmaids lay;
 Not so content, with bolder phrenzy fir'd,
 Ev'n to our bed presumptuous you aspir'd:
 Laws or divine or human fail'd to move,
 Or shame of men, or dread of Gods above;
 Heedless alike of infamy or praise,
 Or fame's eternal voice in future days:
 The hour of vengeance, wretches, now is come,
 Impending fate is yours, and instant doom.

Thus dreadful he. Confus'd the suitors stood,
 From their pale cheeks recedes the flying blood;
 Trembling they sought their guilty heads to hide,
 Alone the bold Eurymachus reply'd.

If, as thy words import, (he thus began)
 Ulysses lives, and thou the mighty man,
 Great are thy wrongs, and much hast thou sustain'd:
 In thy spoil'd palace, and exhausted land;
 The cause and author of those guilty deeds,
 Lo! at thy feet unjust Antinous bleeds.
 Not love, but wild ambition was his guide,
 To slay thy son, thy kingdoms to divide,
 These were his aims, but juster Jove deny'd.
 Since cold in death th' offender lies; oh spare
 Thy suppliant people, and receive their pray'r!
 Brass, gold, and treasures shall the spoil defray,
 Two hundred oxen ev'ry prince shall pay:
 The waste of years refunded in a day.

'Till then thy wrath is just — Ulysses burn'd
With high disdain, and sternly thus return'd.

All, all the treasures that enrich'd our throne
Before your rapines, join'd with all your own,
If offer'd, vainly should for mercy call;
'Tis you that offer, and I scorn them all;
Your blood is my demand, your lives the prize,
'Till pale as yonder wretch each suitor lies.
Hence with those coward terms; or fight or fly,
This choice is left ye, to resist or die;
And die I trust ye shall. — He sternly spoke:
With guilty fears the pale assembly shook.
Alone Eurymachus exhorts the train:
Yon archer, comrades, will not shoot in vain;
But from the threshold shall his darts be sped,
(Whoe'er he be) 'till ev'ry prince lie dead.
Be mindful of yourselves, draw forth your swords,
And to your shafts obtend these ample boards,
(So need compells.) Then all united strive
The bold invader from his post to drive;
The city rous'd shall to our rescue haste,
And this mad archer soon have shot his last.

Swift as he spoke, he drew his traitor sword,
And like a lion rush'd against his lord:
The wary chief the rushing foe repress,
Who met the point, and forc'd it in his breast:
His failing hand deserts the lifted sword,
And prone he falls extended o'er the board!
Before him wide, in mixt effusion roll
Th' untasted viands, and the jovial bowl.

Full thro' his liver past the mortal wound,
 With dying rage his forehead beats the ground,
 He spurn'd the seat with fury as he fell,
 And the fierce soul to darkness div'd, and hell.

Next bold Amphinomus his arm extends
 To force the pass: the god-like man defends.
 Thy spear, Telemachus! prevents th' attack,
 The brazen weapon driving thro' his back,
 Thence thro' his breast its bloody passage tore;
 Flat falls he thund'ring on the marble floor,
 And his crush'd forehead marks the stone with gore.
 He left his jav'lin in the dead, for fear
 The long incumbrance of the weighty spear
 To the fierce foe advantage might afford,
 To rush between, and use the shorten'd sword.
 With speedy ardour to his fire he flies,
 And, arm, great father! arm (in haste he cries)
 Lo hence I run for other arms to wield,
 For missile jav'lins, and for helm and shield;
 Fast by our side let either faithful swain
 In arms attend us, and their part sustain.

Haste and return (Ulysses made reply)
 While yet th' auxiliar shafts this hand supply;
 Left thus alone, encountred by an host,
 Driv'n from the gate, th' important pass be lost.

With speed Telemachus obeys, and flies
 Where pil'd on heaps the royal armour lies;
 Four brazen helmets, eight refulgent spears,
 And four broad bucklers, to his fire he bears:
 At once in brazen panoply they shone,
 At once each servant brac'd his armour on;

Around their king a faithful guard they stand,
 While yet each shaft flew deathful from his hand:
 Chief after chief expir'd at ev'ry wound,
 And swell'd the bleeding mountain on the ground,
 Soon as his store of flying fates was spent,
 Against the wall he set the bow unbent:
 And now his shoulders bear the massy shield,
 And now his hands two beamy jav'lines wield;
 He frowns beneath his nodding plume, that play'd
 O'er the high crest, and cast a dreadful shade.

There stood a window near, whence looking down
 From o'er the porch, appear'd the subject town.
 A double strength of valves secur'd the place,
 A high and narrow, but the only pass:
 The cautious king with all-preventing care,
 To guard that outlet plac'd Eumaeus there:
 When Agelaus thus: Has none the sense
 To mount yon window, and alarm from thence
 The neighbour town? the town shall force the door
 And this bold archer soon shall shoot no more.

Melanthius then: That outlet to the gate
 So near adjoins, that one may guard the strait.
 But other methods of defence remain,
 Myself with arms can furnish all the train;
 Stores from the royal magazine I bring,
 And their own darts shall pierce the prince and king.

He said; and mounting up the lofty stairs,
 Twelve shields, twelve lances, and twelve helmets bear
 All arm, and sudden round the hall appears
 A blaze of bucklers, and a wood of spears.

The hero stands oppress'd with mighty woe,
 Ev'ry side he sees the labour grow:
 A curse event! and oh unlook'd-for aid!
 Elanthius or the women have betray'd——
 My dear son!—— The father with a sigh!
 Then ceas'd; the filial virtue made reply.
 Falshood is folly, and 'tis just to own
 The fault committed; this was mine alone;
 My haste neglected yonder door to bar,
 And hence the villain has supply'd their war.
 In good Eumaeus then, and (what before
 Thoughtless err'd in) well secure that door:
 Learn if by female fraud this deed were done,
 (as my thought misgives) by Dolius' son.
 While yet they spoke, in quest of arms again
 To the high chamber stole the faithless swain.
 Not unobserv'd. Eumaeus watchful ey'd,
 And thus address'd Ulysses near his side.
 The miscreant we suspected takes that way;
 Ah, if this arm be pow'rful, shall I slay?
 I drive him hither, to receive the meed
 From thy own hand, of this detested deed?
 Not so (reply'd Ulysses) leave him there,
 For us sufficient is another care:
 Within the stricture of this palace wall
 To keep inclos'd his masters till they fall.
 To you and seize the felon; backward bind
 His arms and legs, and fix a plank behind;
 On this, his body by strong cords extend,
 And on a column near the roof suspend;
 Study'd tortures his vile days shall end.

}

The ready swains obey'd with joyful haste,
 Behind the felon unperceiv'd they past,
 As round the room in quest of arms he goes:
 (The half-shut door conceal'd his lurking foes)
 One hand sustain'd a helm, and one the shield
 Which old Laertes wont in youth to wield,
 Cover'd with dust, with dryness chapt and worn,
 The brass corroded, and the leather torn:
 Thus laden, o'er the threshold as he stept,
 Fierce on the villain from each side they leapt,
 Back by the hair the trembling dastard drew,
 And down reluctant on the pavement threw.
 Active and pleas'd, the zealous swains fulfil
 At ev'ry point their master's rigid will:
 First, fast behind, his hands and feet they bound,
 Then streighten'd cords involv'd his body round;
 So drawn aloft, athwart the column ty'd,
 The howling felon swung from side to side.

Eumaeus scoffing, then with keen disdain:
 There pass thy pleasing night, oh gentle swain!
 On that soft pillow, from that envy'd height
 First may'st thou see the springing dawn of light;
 So timely rise, when morning streaks the east,
 To drive thy victims to the suitors feast.

This said, they left him, tortur'd as he lay,
 Secur'd the door, and hasty strode away:
 Each, breathing death, resum'd his dang'rous post
 Near great Ulysses; four against an host.
 When lo! descending to her hero's aid
 Jove's daughter Pallas, war's triumphat maid:

Mentor's friendly form she join'd his side;
 Ulysses saw, and thus with transport cry'd.

Come, ever welcome, and thy succour lend;
 Th' ev'ry sacred name in one! my friend!

Early we lov'd, and long our loves have grown:

That-e'er thro' life's whole series I have done

For good, or grateful, now to mind recall,

And aiding this one hour, repay it all.

Thus he; but pleasing hopes his bosom warm
 Of Pallas latent in the friendly form.

The adverse host the phantom warrior ey'd,

And first loud-threatning, Agelaüs cry'd.

Mentor beware, nor let that tongue persuade

Thy frantic arm to lend Ulysses aid;

Our force successful shall our threat make good,

And with the fire's and son's commix thy blood.

What hop'st thou here? thee first the sword shall slay,

Then lop thy whole posterity away;

Far hence thy banish'd consort shall we send;

With his, thy forfeit lands and treasures blend;

Thus, and thus only, shalt thou join thy friend.

His barb'rous insult, ev'n the goddess's fires,

Who thus the warrior to revenge inspires.

Art thou Ulysses? where then shall we find

The patient body and the constant mind?

That courage, once the Trojans daily dread,

Known nine long years, and felt by heroes dead?

And where that conduct, which reveng'd the lust

Of Priam's race, and lay'd proud Troy in dust?

At this when Helen was the cause, were done,

What for thy country now, thy queen, thy son?

Rise then in combat, at my side attend;
 Observe what vigour gratitude can lend,
 And foes how weak, oppos'd against a friend!

She spoke; but willing longer to survey
 The sire and son's great acts, withheld the day;
 By farther toils decreed the brave to try,
 And level'd pois'd the wings of victory:
 Then with a change of form eludes their sight,
 Perch'd like a swallow on a rafter's height,
 And unperceiv'd, enjoys the rising fight.

Damastor's son, bold Agelaus, leads
 The guilty war; Eurynomus succeeds:
 With these, Pisander great Polyctor's son,
 Sage Polybus, and stern Amphimedon,
 With Demoptolemus: these six survive,
 The best of all the shafts had left alive.
 Amidst the carnage desp'rate as they stand,
 Thus Agelaus rous'd the lagging band.

The hour is come, when yon fierce man no more
 With bleeding princes shall bestrow the floor:
 Lo! Mentor leaves him with an empty boast;
 The four remain, but four against an host.
 Let each at once discharge the deadly dart,
 One sure of six shall reach Ulysses heart:
 Thus shall one stroke the glory lost regain:
 The rest must perish, their great leader slain.
 Then all at once their mingled lances threw,
 And thirsty all of one man's blood they flew;
 In vain! Minerva turn'd them in her breath,
 And scatter'd short, or wide, the points of death;

With deaden'd sound, one on the threshold falls,
 One strikes the gate, one rings against the walls;
 The storm past innocent. The godlike man
 Now loftier trode, and dreadful thus began.
 'Tis now (brave friends) our turn, at once to throw
 (So speed 'em heav'n) our jav'lines at the foe.
 That impious race to all their past misdeeds
 Would add our blood. Injustice still proceeds.

He spoke: at once their fiery lances flew:
 Great Demoptolemus, Ulysses flew;
 Euryades receiv'd the prince's dart;
 The goat-herd's quiver'd in Pisander's heart:
 Fierce Elatus by thine, Eumaeus, falls;
 Their fall in thunder echoes round the walls.
 The rest retreat: the victors now advance,
 Each from the dead resumes his bloody lance.
 Again the foe discharge the steely show'r;
 Again made frustrate by the virgin pow'r.
 Some, turn'd by Pallas, on the threshold fall,
 Some wound the gate, some ring against the wall;
 Some weak, or pond'rous with the brazen head,
 Drop harmless, on the pavement sounding dead.

Then bold Amphimedon his jav'lin cast;
 Thy hand, Telemachus, it lightly raz'd;
 And from Ctesippus' arm the spear elanc'd
 On good Eumaeus' shield and shoulder glanc'd;
 Nor lessen'd of their force (so slight the wound)
 Each sung along, and drop'd upon the ground.
 Fate doom'd thee next, Eurydamas, to bear
 Thy death ennobled by Ulysses' spear.

By the bold son Amphimedon was slain :
 And Polybus renown'd the faithful swain.
 Pierc'd thro' the breast the rude Ctesippus bled,
 And thus Philaetius gloried o'er the dead.

There end thy pompous vaunts, and high disdain,
 Oh sharp in scandal, voluble and vain !
 How weak is mortal pride ! to heav'n alone
 Th' event of actions and our fates are known :
 Scoffer, behold what gratitude we bear :
 The victim's heel is answer'd with this spear.

Ulysses brandish'd high his vengeful steel,
 And Damastorides that instant fell ;
 Fast by, Leocritus expiring lay,
 The prince's jav'lin tore its bloody way
 Thro' all his bowels : down he tumbles prone,
 His batter'd front and brains besmear the stone.

Now Pallas shines confess'd ; aloft she spreads
 The arm of vengeance o'er their guilty heads ;
 The dreadful Ægis blazes in their eye ;
 Amaz'd they see, they tremble, and they fly :
 Confus'd, distracted, thro' the rooms they fling,
 Like oxen madden'd by the breeze's sling,
 When sultry days, and long, succeed the gentle spring.
 Not half so keen, fierce vulturs of the chace
 Stoop from the mountains on the feather'd race.
 When the wide field extended snares beset,
 With conscious dread they shun the quiv'ring net :
 No help, no flight ; but wounded ev'ry way,
 Headlong they drop : the fowlers seize the prey.
 On all sides thus they double wound on wound,
 In prostrate heaps the wretches beat the ground,

Unmanly shrieks precede each dying groan,
And a red deluge floats the reeking stone.

Liodes first before the victor falls:

The wretched augur thus for mercy calls.

O gracious hear, nor let thy suppliant bleed:

Still undishonour'd or by word or deed

Thy house, for me, remains; by me repress'd

Full oft was check'd th' injustice of the rest:

Averse they heard me when I counsell'd well,

Their hearts were harden'd, and they justly fell.

Oh spare an augur's consecrated head,

Nor add the blameless to the guilty dead.

Priest as thou art! for that detested band

Thy lying prophecies deceiv'd the land:

Against Ulysses have thy vows been made;

For them, thy daily orisons were paid:

Yet more, ev'n to our bed thy pride aspires:

One common crime one common fate requires.

Thus speaking, from the ground the sword he took

Which Agelaus' dying hand forsook;

Full thro' his neck the weighty faulchion sped:

Along the pavement roll'd the mutt'ring head.

Phemius alone the hand of vengeance spar'd,

Phemius the sweet, the heav'n-instructed bard.

Beside the gate the rev'rend minstrel stands;

The lyre, now silent, trembling in his hands;

Dubious to supplicate the chief, or fly

To Jove's inviolable altar nigh,

Where oft Laertes holy vows had paid,

And oft Ulysses smoking victims laid.

His honour'd harp with care he first set down,
Between the laver and the silver throne;
Then prostrate stretch'd before the dreadful man,
Persuasive, thus, with accent soft began.

O king! to mercy be thy soul inclin'd,
And spare the poet's ever-gentle kind.
A deed like this thy future fame would wrong,
For dear to Gods and men is sacred song.
Self-taught I sing; by heav'n, and heav'n alone
The genuine seeds of poesy are sown;
And (what the Gods bestow) the lofty lay,
To Gods alone, and god-like worth, we pay.
Save then the poet, and thy self reward;
'Tis thine to merit, mine is to record.
That here I sung, was force and not desire;
This hand reluctant touch'd the warbling wire:
And let thy son attest, nor fordid pay
Nor servile flatter'ry stain'd the moral lay.

The moving words Telemachus attends,
His fire approaches, and the bard defends.
Oh mix not, father, with those impious dead
The man divine; forbear that sacred head;
Medon the herald too our arms may spare,
Medon, who made my infancy his care;
If yet he breathes, permit thy son to give
Thus much to gratitude, and bid him live.

Beneath a table, trembling with dismay,
Couch'd close to earth, unhappy Medon lay,
Wrapt in a new slain ox's ample hide:
Swift at the word he cast his skreen aside,

Sprung to the prince, embrac'd his knee with tears,
And thus with grateful voice address'd his ears:

O prince! O friend! lo here thy Medon stands;
Ah stop the hero's unresisted hands,
Incens'd too justly by that impious brood,
Whose guilty glories now are set in blood.

To whom Ulysses with a pleasing eye;
Be bold, on friendship and my son rely:
Live, an example for the world to read,
How much more safe the good than evil deed:
Thou, with the heav'n-taught bard, in peace resort
From blood and carnage to yon open court:
Me other work requires—With tim'rous awe
From the dire scene th' exempted two withdraw,
Scarce sure of life, look round, and trembling move
To the bright altars of protector Jove.

Mean-while Ulysses search'd the dome, to find
If yet there live of all th' offending kind.
Not one! compleat the bloody tale he found,
All steep'd in blood. all gasping on the ground.

So, when by hollow shores the fisher train
Sweep with their arching nets the heary main,
And scarce the meshy toils the copious draught contain,
All naked of their element, and bare,
The fishes pant, and gasp in thinner air;
Wide o'er the sands are spread the stiff'ning prey
'Till the warm sun exhales their soul away.

And now the king commands his son to call
Old Euryclea, to the deathful hall:
The son observant not a moment stays;
The aged governess with speed obeys:

The sounding portals instant they display;
 The matron moves, the prince directs the way.
 On heaps of death the stern Ulysses stood,
 All black with dust and cover'd thick with blood.
 So the grim lion from the slaughter comes,
 Dreadful he glares, and terribly he foams,
 His breast with marks of carnage painted o'er,
 His jaws all dropping with the bull's black gore.

Soon as her eyes the welcome object met,
 The guilty fall'n, the mighty deed compleat;
 A scream of joy her feeble voice essay'd:
 The hero check'd her, and compos'dly said.

Woman, experienc'd as thou art, controul
 Indecent joy, and feast thy secret soul.
 T'insult the dead is cruel and unjust;
 Fate, and their crime, have sunk them to the dust;
 Nor heeded these the censure of mankind,
 The good and bad were equal in their mind.
 Justly the price of worthlessness they paid,
 And each now wails an unlamented shade.
 But thou sincere! Oh Euryclea, say,
 What maids dishonour us, and what obey?

Then she. In these thy kingly walls remain
 (My son) full fifty of the handmaid train,
 Taught by my care to cull the fleece or weave,
 And servitude with pleasing tasks deceive;
 Of these, twice six pursue their wicked way,
 Nor me nor chaste Penelope obey;
 Nor fits it that Telemachus command
 (Young as he is) his mother's female band.

Hence to the upper chambers let me fly,
 Where slumbers soft now close the royal eye;
 There wake her with the news—The matron cry'd;
 Not so (Ulysses more sedate reply'd)
 Bring first the crew who wrought these guilty deeds.
 In haste the matron parts: the king proceeds.

Now to dispose the dead, the care remains
 To you, my son, and you, my faithful swains;
 Th'offending females to that task we doom,
 To wash, to scent, and purify the room.
 These (ev'ry table cleans'd, and ev'ry throne,
 And all the melancholy labour done)
 Drive to yon' court, without the palace wall,
 There the revenging sword shall smite them all;
 So with the suitors let them mix in dust,
 Stretch'd in a long oblivion of their lust.

He said: the lamentable train appear,
 Each vents a groan, and drops a tender tear;
 Each heav'd her mournful burthen, and beneath
 The porch, depos'd the ghastly heaps of death.
 The chief severe, compelling each to move,
 Urg'd the dire task imperious from above.
 With thirsty sponge they rub the tables o'er,
 (The swains unite their toil) the walls, the floor
 Wash, with th' effusive wave, are purg'd of gore. }
 Once more the palace set in fair array,
 To the base court the females take their way;
 There compass'd close between the dome and wall,
 (Their life's last scene) they trembling wait their fall.

Then thus the prince. To these shall we afford
 A fate so pure, as by the martial sword?

To these, the nightly prostitutes to shame,
And base revilers of our house and name?

Thus speaking, on the circling wall he strung
A ship's tough cable, from a column hung;
Near the high top he strain'd it strongly round,
Whence no contending foot could reach the ground.
Their heads above, connected in a row,
They beat the air with quiv'ring feet below :
Thus on some tree hung struggling in the snare,
The doves or thrushes flap their wings in air.
Soon fled the soul impure, and left behind
The empty corse to waver with the wind.

Then forth they led Melanthius, and began
Their bloody work: they lopp'd away the man,
Morsel for dogs! then trimm'd with brazen sheers
The wretch, and shorten'd of his nose and ears;
His hands and feet last felt the cruel steel:
He roar'd, and torments gave his soul to hell——

They wash, and to Ulysses take their way,
So ends the bloody business of the day.

To Euryclea then address the king:
Bring hither fire, and hither sulphur bring,
To purge the palace: then the queen attend,
And let her with her matron-train descend;
The matron-train with all the virgin band
Assemble here, to learn their lord's command.

Then Euryclea; Joyful I obey,
But cast those mean dishonest rags away;
Permit me first thy royal robes to bring:
Ill suits this garb the shoulders of a king.

Bring sulphur stait and fire (the monarch cries)

he hears, and at the word obedient flies.

With fire and sulphur, cure of noxious fumes,

he purg'd the walls and blood-polluted rooms.

Again the matron springs with eager pace,

and spreads her lord's return from place to place.

They hear, rush forth, and instant round him stand,

gazing throng, a torch in ev'ry hand.

They saw, they knew him, and with fond embrace

each humbly kist his knee, or hand, or face;

he knows them all; in all such truth appears,

when he indulges the sweet joy of tears.

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THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XXIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

EURICLEA awakens Penelope with the news of Ulysses's return, and the death of the suitors. Penelope scarcely credits her, but supposes some God has punish'd them, and descends from her apartment in doubt. At the first interview of Ulysses and Penelope, she is quite unsatisfy'd. Minerva restores him to the beauty of his youth; but the queen continues incredulous, till by some circumstances she is convinc'd, and falls into all the transports of passion and tenderness. They recount to each other all that has past during their long separation. The next morning Ulysses, arming himself and his friends, goes from the city to visit his father.

THEN to the queen, as in repose she lay,
The nurse with eager rapture speeds her way;
The transports of her faithful heart supply
A sudden youth, and give her wings to fly.
And sleeps my child? the rev'rend matron cries:
Ulysses lives! arise, my child, arise!
At length appears the long-expected hour!
Ulysses comes! the suitors are no more!

No more they view the golden light of day;
Arise, and bless thee with the glad survey!

Touch'd at her words, the mournful queen rejoin'd
Ah! whither wanders thy distemper'd mind?
The righteous pow'rs who tread the starry skies,
The weak enlighten and confound the wise,
And human thought, with unresisted sway,
Depress or raise, enlarge or take away:
Truth, by their high decree, thy voice forsakes,
And folly, with the tongue of wisdom speaks.
Unkind, the fond illusion to impose!
Was it to flatter, or deride my woes?
Never did I a sleep so sweet enjoy,
Since my dear lord left Ithaca for Troy:
Why must I wake to grieve, and curse thy shore?
O Troy—may never tongue pronounce thee more!
Be gone: another might have felt our rage,
But age is sacred, and we spare thy age.

To whom with warmth: My soul a lie disdains;
Ulysses lives, thy own Ulysses reigns:
That stranger, patient of the suitors wrongs,
And the rude licence of ungovern'd tongues,
He, he is thine! thy son, his latent guest
Long knew, but lock'd the secret in his breast;
With well-concerted art to end his woes,
And burst at once in vengeance of the foes.

While yet she spoke, the queen in transport sprung
Swift from the couch, and round the matron hung;
Fast from her eye descends the rolling tear,
Say, once more say, is my Ulysses here?

How could that num'rous and outrageous band

By one be slain, tho' by an hero's hand?

join'd I saw it not, she cries, but heard alone,

When death was busy, a loud dying groan,

The damsel-train turn'd pale at ev'ry wound,

Immur'd we fate, and catch'd each passing sound;

When death had seiz'd her prey, thy son attends,

And at his nod the damsel train descends;

There terrible in arms Ulysses stood,

And the dead suitors almost swam in blood;

Thy heart had leap'd the hero to survey,

Stern as the surly lion o'er his prey,

Glorious in gore!—now with sulphureous fires,

The dome he purges, now the flame aspires;

Heap'd lie the dead without the palace walls,—

Haste, daughter haste, thy own Ulysses calls!

Thy every wish the bounteous Gods bestow,

Enjoy the present good, and former woe;

Ulysses lives his vanquish'd foes to see;

He lives to thy Telemachus and thee!

Ah no! with sighs Penelope rejoin'd,

Excess of joy disturbs thy wand'ring mind;

How blest this happy hour, should he appear,

Dear to us all, to me supremely dear!

Ah no! some God the suitors deaths decreed,

Some God descends, and by his hand they bleed;

Blind! to condemn the stranger's righteous cause,

And violate all hospitable laws!

The good they hated, and the pow'rs defy'd;

But heav'n is just, and by a God they dy'd.

For never must Ulysses view this shore;
Never! the lov'd Ulysses is no more!

What words (the matron cries) have reach'd my ears?
Doubt we his presence, when he now appears?
Then hear conviction: ere the fatal day
That forc'd Ulysses o'er the wat'ry way,
A boar fierce-rushing in the sylvan-war
Plough'd half his thigh; I saw, I saw the scar,
And wild with transport had reveal'd the wound;
But ere I spoke, he rose, and check'd the sound.
Then daughter haste away! and if a lie
Flow from this tongue, then let thy servant die!

To whom with dubious joy the queen replies,
Wife is thy soul, but errors seize the wife;
The works of Gods what mortal can survey,
Who knows their motives, who shall trace their way!
But learn we instant how the suitors trod
The paths of death, by man or by a God.

Thus speaks the queen, and no reply attends,
But with alternate joy and fear descends;
At ev'ry step debates, her lord to prove!
Or rushing to his arms, confess her love!
Then gliding thro' the marble valves in state,
Oppos'd, before the shining fire she fate.
The monarch, by a column high enthron'd,
His eye withdrew, and fix'd it on the ground;
Curious to hear his queen the silence break:
Amaz'd she fate, and impotent to speak;
O'er all the man her eyes she rolls in vain,
Now hopes, now fears, now knows, then doubts again.

At length Telemachus—Oh who can find
 A woman like Penelope unkind?
 Why thus in silence? why with winning charms
 Thus slow, to fly with rapture to his arms?
 Stubborn the breast that with no transport glows,
 When twice ten years are past of mighty woes:
 To softness lost, to spousal love unknown,
 The Gods have form'd that rigid heart of stone!

O my Telemachus! the queen rejoin'd,
 Distracting fears confound my lab'ring mind;
 Pow'rless to speak, I scarce uplift my eyes,
 Nor dare to question: doubts on doubts arise.
 O deign he, if Ulysses, to remove
 These boding thoughts, and what he is, to prove!

Pleas'd with her virtuous fears, the king replies,
 Indulge, my son, the cautions of the wise;
 Time shall the truth to sure remembrance bring:
 This garb of poverty belies the king;
 No more.—This day our deepest care requires,
 Cautious to act what thought mature inspires.
 If one man's blood, tho' mean, distain our hands,
 The homicide retreats to foreign lands;
 By us, in heaps th' illustrious peerage falls,
 Th' important deed our whole attention calls.

Be that thy care, Telemachus replies,
 The world conspires to speak Ulysses wise;
 For wisdom all is thine! lo I obey,
 And dauntless follow where you lead the way;
 Nor shalt thou in the day of danger find
 Thy coward son degen'rate lag behind.

Then instant to the bath, (the monarch cries)
 Bid the gay youth and sprightly virgins rise,
 Thence all descend in pomp and proud array,
 And bid the dome resound the mirthful lay;
 While the sweet lyrist airs of raptures sings,
 And forms the dance responsive to the strings.
 That hence th' eluded passengers may say,
 Lo! the queen weds! we hear the spousal lay!
 The suitors death unknown, 'till we remove
 Far from the court, and act inspir'd by Jove.

Thus spoke the king: th' observant train obey,
 At once they bathe, and dress in proud array;
 The lyrist strikes the string; gay youths advance,
 And fair-zon'd damsels form the sprightly dance.
 The voice, attun'd to instrumental sounds,
 Ascends the roof; the vaulted roof rebounds;
 Not unobserv'd: the Greeks eluded say
 Lo! the queen weds! we hear the spousal lay!
 Inconstant! to admit the bridal hour.
 Thus they—but nobly chaste she weds no more.

Mean-while the weary'd king the bath ascends;
 With faithful cares Eurynomè attends,
 O'er ev'ry limb a show'r of fragrance sheds:
 Then drest in pomp, magnificent he treads.
 The warrior-Goddes gives his frame to shine
 With majesty enlarg'd, and grace divine.
 Back from his brows in wavy ringlets fly
 His thick large locks, of Hyacinthine dye.
 As by some artist to whom Vulcan gives
 His heav'nly skill, a breathing image lives;

By Pallas taught, he frames the wond'rous mold,
 And the pale silver glows with fusile gold:
 So Pallas his heroic form improves
 With bloom divine, and like a God he moves;
 More high he treads, and issuing forth in state,
 Radiant before his gazing consort sate.
 And oh my queen! he cries; what pow'r above
 Has steel'd that heart, averse to spousal love!
 Canst thou, Penelope, when heav'n restores
 Thy lost Ulysses to his native shores,
 Canst thou, oh cruel! unconcern'd survey
 Thy lost Ulysses on this signal day?
 Haste, Euryclea, and dispatchful spread
 For me, and me alone, th' imperial bed:
 My weary nature craves the balm of rest:
 But heav'n with adamant has arm'd her breast.

Ah no! she cries, a tender heart I bear,
 A foe to pride; no adamant is there;
 And now, ev'n now it melts! for sure I see
 Once more Ulysses my belov'd in thee!
 Fix'd in my soul as when he sail'd to Troy,
 His image dwells: then haste the bed of joy!
 Haste, from the bridal bow'r the bed translate,
 Fram'd by his hand, and be it drest in state!

Thus speaks the queen, still dubious, with disguise;
 Touch'd at her words, the king with warmth replies,
 Alas for this! what mortal strength can move
 Th' enormous burthen, who but heav'n above?
 It mocks the weak attempts of human hands;
 But the whole earth must move, if heav'n commands.

Then hear sure evidence, while we display
 Words seal'd with sacred truth, and truth obey :
 This hand the wonder fram'd ; an olive spread
 Full in the court its ever-verdant head.
 Vast as some mighty column's bulk on high
 The huge trunk rose, and heav'd into the sky ;
 Around the tree I rais'd a nuptial bow'r
 And roof'd defensive of the storm and show'r ;
 The spacious valve, with art inwrought, conjoins ;
 And the fair dome with polish'd marble shines.
 I lopp'd the branchy head ; aloft in twain
 Sever'd the bole, and smooth'd the shining grain ;
 Then posts, capacious of the frame, I raise,
 And bore it, regular from space to space :
 Athwart the frame, at equal distance lye
 Thongs of tough hides, that boast a purple dye ;
 Then polishing the whole, the finish'd mold
 With silver shone, with elephant, and gold.
 But if o'erturn'd by rude, ungovern'd hands,
 Or still inviolate the olive stands,
 'Tis thine, oh queen, to say : and now impart,
 If fears remain, or doubts distract thy heart ?

While yet he speaks, her pow'rs of life decay,
 She sickens, trembles, falls, and faints away :
 At length recov'ring, to his arms she flew,
 And strain'd him close, as to his breast she grew ;
 The tears pour'd down amain : And oh, she cries,
 Let not against thy spouse thine anger rise !
 O vers'd in ev'ry turn of human heart,
 Forgive the weakness of a woman's heart !

The righteous pow'rs that mortal lots dispose,
 Decree us to sustain a length of woes,
 And from the flow'r of life, the bliss deny
 To bloom together, fade away, and die.
 O let me, let me not thine anger move,
 That I forbore, thus, thus, to speak my love;
 Thus in fond kisses, while the transport warms,
 Pour out my soul, and die within thy arms!
 I dreaded fraud! Men, faithless men, betray
 Our easy faith, and make the sex their prey:
 Against the fondness of my heart I strove,
 'Twas caution, oh my lord! not want of love:
 Like me had Helen fear'd, with wanton charms
 Ere the fair mischief set two worlds in arms,
 Ere Greece rose dreadful in th' avenging day,
 Thus had she fear'd, she had not gone astray.
 But heav'n, averse to Greece, in wrath decreed
 That she should wander, and that Greece should bleed:
 Blind to the ills that from injustice flow,
 She colour'd all our wretched lives with woe.
 But why these sorrows, when my lord arrives?
 I yield, I yield! my own Ulysses lives!
 The secrets of the bridal bed are known
 To thee, to me, to Actoris alone,
 (My father's present in the spousal hour,
 The sole attendant on our genial bow'r.)
 Since what no eye has seen thy tongue reveal'd,
 Hard and distrustful as I am, I yield.
 Touch'd to the soul the king with rapture hears,
 Hangs round her neck, and speaks his joy in tears.

As to the shipwreck'd mariner, the shores,
 Delightful rise, when angry Neptune roars,
 Then, when the surge in thunder mounts the sky,
 And gulph'd in crouds at once the sailors die,
 If one more happy, while the tempest raves
 Out-lives the tumult of conflicting waves,
 All pale, with ooze deform'd, he views the strand,
 And plunging forth with transport grasps the land.
 The ravish'd queen with equal rapture glows,
 Clasps her lov'd lord, and to his bosom grows.
 Nor had they ended till the morning ray :
 But Pallas backward held the rising day,
 The wheels of night retarding, to detain
 The gay Aurora in the wavy main :
 Whose flaming steeds, emerging thro' the night,
 Beam o'er the eastern hills with streaming light.

At length Ulysses with a sigh replies :
 Yet fate, yet cruel fate repose denies ;
 A labour long, and hard, remains behind ;
 By heav'n above, by hell beneath enjoin'd :
 For, to Tiresias thro' th' eternal gates
 Of hell I trod, to learn my future fates.
 But end we here—the night demands repose,
 Be deck'd the couch ! and peace a-while my woes !

To whom the queen. Thy word we shall obey,
 And deck the couch ; far hence be woes away !
 Since the just Gods who tread the starry plains
 Restore thee safe, since my Ulysses reigns.
 But what those perils heav'n decrees, impart ;
 Knowledge may grieve, but fear distracts the heart.

To this the king. Ah why must I disclose
 A dreadful story of approaching woes?
 Why in this hour of transport wound thy ears,
 When thou must learn what I must speak with tears?
 Heav'n, by the Theban ghost, thy spouse decrees
 Torn from thy arms, to sail a length of seas;
 From realm to realm a nation to explore
 Who ne'er knew salt, or heard the billows roar,
 Nor saw gay vessel stem the surgy plain,
 A painted wonder, flying on the main,
 An oar my hand must bear; a shepherd eyes
 The unknown instrument with strange surprize,
 And calls a corn-van: this upon the plain
 I fix, and hail the monarch of the main;
 Then bathe his altars with the mingled gore
 Of victims vow'd, a ram, a bull, a boar:
 Thence swift re-sailing to my native shores,
 Due victims slay to all th' aethereal pow'rs.
 Then heav'n decrees in peace to end my days,
 And steal myself from life by slow decays;
 Unknown to pain in age resign my breath,
 When late stern Neptune points the shaft of death;
 To the dark grave retiring as to rest;
 My people blessing, by my people blest.

Such future scenes th' all-righteous pow'rs display,
 By their dread * seer, and such my future day.

To whom thus firm of soul: If ripe for death,
 And full of days, thou gently yield thy breath:
 While heav'n a kind release from ills foreshows,
 Triumph, thou happy victor of thy woes!

* Tiresias.

But Euryclea with dispatchful care,
And sage Eurynomè, the couch prepare:
Instant they bid the blazing torch display
Around the dome an artificial day;
Then to repose her steps the matron bends,
And to the queen Eurynomè descends;
A torch she bears to light with guiding fires
The royal pair; she guides them, and retires.
Then instant his fair spouse Ulysses led
To the chaste love-rites of the nuptial bed.

And now the blooming youths and sprightly fair
Cease the gay dance, and to their rest repair;
But in discourse the king and consort lay,
While the soft hours stole unperceiv'd away;
Intent he hears Penelope disclose
A mournful story of domestic woes,
His servants insults, his invaded bed,
How his whole flocks and herds exhausted bled,
His gen'rous wines dishonour'd shed in vain,
And the wild riots of the suitor-train.
The king alternate a dire tale relates,
Of wars, of triumphs, and disastrous fates;
All he unfolds: his list'ning spouse turns pale
With pleasing horror at the dreadful tale,
Sleepless devours each word; and hears, how slain
Cicons on Cicons swell th' ensanguin'd plain;
How to the land of Lote unblest he fails;
And images the rills, and flow'ry vales!
How dash'd like dogs, his friends the Cyclops tore,
(Not unreveng'd) and quaff'd the spouting gore;

How the loud storms in prison bound, he sails
 From friendly Eölus with prosp'rous gales;
 Yet fate withstands! a sudden tempest roars
 And whirls him groaning from his native shores:
 How on the barb'rous Laestrigonian coast,
 By savage hands his fleet and friends he lost;
 How scarce himself surviv'd: he paints the bow'r,
 The spells of Circe, and her magic pow'r;
 His dreadful journey to the realms beneath,
 To seek Tiresias in the vales of death;
 How in the doleful mansions he survey'd
 His royal mother, pale Anticlea's shade;
 And friends in battle slain, heroic ghosts!
 Then how unharm'd he past the Siren-coasts,
 The jussling rocks where fierce Charybdis raves,
 And howling Scylla whirls her thund'rous waves,
 The cave of death! how his companions slay
 The oxen sacred to the God of day,
 'Till Jove in wrath the rattling tempest guides,
 And whelms th' offenders in the roaring tydes:
 How struggling thro' the surge, he reach'd the shores
 Of fair Ogygia, and Calypso's bow'rs;
 Where the gay blooming nymph constrain'd his stay,
 With sweet reluctant amorous delay;
 And promis'd, vainly promis'd, to bestow
 Immortal life exempt from age and woe:
 How sav'd from storms Phaeacia's coast he trod,
 By great Alcinous honour'd as a God,
 Who gave him last his country to behold,
 With change of raiment, brass, and heaps of gold.

He ended, sinking into sleep, and shares
A sweet forgetfulness of all his cares.

Soon as soft slumber eas'd the toils of day,
Minerva rushes thro' th' aerial way,
And bids Aurora with the golden wheels
Flame from the ocean o'er the eastern hills:
Uprose Ulysses from the genial bed,
And thus with thought mature the monarch said.

My queen, my consort! thro' a length of years,
We drank the cup of sorrow mix'd with tears,
Thou, for thy lord; while me th' immortal pow'rs
Detain'd reluctant from my native shores.
Now, blest again by heav'n, the queen display,
And rule our palace with an equal sway:
Be it my care, by loans, or martial toils,
To throng my empty'd folds, with gifts or spoils.
But now I haste to bless Laertes' eyes
With sight of his Ulysses ere he dies;
The good old man, to wasting woes a prey,
Weeps a sad life in solitude away.
But hear, tho' wise! this morning shall unfold
The deathful scene, on heroes, heroes roll'd;
Thou with thy maids within the palace stay,
From all the scene of tumult far away!

He spoke, and sheath'd in arms, incessant flies
To wake his son; and bid his friends arise.
To arms! aloud he cries: his friends obey,
With glitt'ring arms their manly limbs array,
And pass the city-gate; Ulysses leads the way.
Now flames the rosy dawn, but Pallas shrouds
The latent warriors in a veil of clouds.

9.

T H E

O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XXIV.

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T H E A R G U M E N T.

THE souls of the suitors are conducted by Mercury to the infernal shades. Ulysses in the country goes to the retirement of his father Laertes; he finds him busied in his garden all alone: The manner of his discovery to him is beautifully described. They return together to his lodge, and the king is acknowledged by Dolius and the servants. The Ithacensians, led by Eupithes the father of Antinous, rise against Ulysses, who gives them battle, in which Eupithes is killed by Laertes: And the Goddess Pallas makes a lasting peace between Ulysses and his subjects, which concludes the Odyssey.

CYLLENIUS now to Pluto's dreary reign
Conveys the dead, a lamentable train!

} The golden wand, that causes sleep to fly,
Or in soft slumber seals the wakeful eye,
That drives the ghosts to realms of night or day,
Points out the long, uncomfortable way.
Trembling the spectres glide, and plaintive vent
Thin, hollow screams, along the deep descent.
As in the cavern of some rifted den,
Where flock nocturnal bats, and birds obscene;

Cluster'd they hang, till at some sudden shock,
 They move, and murmurs run thro' all the rock:
 So cowering fled the sable heaps of ghosts,
 And such a scream fill'd all the dismal coasts.
 And now they reach'd the earth's remotest ends,
 And now the gates where ev'ning Sol descends,
 And Leucas' rock, and Ocean's utmost streams,
 And now pervade the dusky land of dreams,
 And rest at last, where souls unbodied dwell
 In ever-flow'ring meads of Asphodel.
 The empty forms of men inhabit there,
 Impassive semblance, images of air!
 Nought else are all that shin'd on earth before;
 Ajax, and great Achilles, are no more!
 Yet still a master-ghost, the rest he aw'd,
 The rest ador'd him, tow'ring as he trod;
 Still at his side is Nestor's son survey'd,
 And lov'd Patroclus still attends his shade.

New as they were to that infernal shore,
 The suitors stop'd, and gaz'd the hero o'er.
 When, moving slow, the regal form they view'd
 Of great Atrides: Him in pomp pursu'd
 And solemn sadness thro' the gloom of hell,
 The train of those who by Ægysthus fell.
 O mighty chief! (Pelides thus began)
 Honour'd by Jove above the lot of man!
 King of a hundred kings! to whom resign'd
 The strongest, bravest, greatest of mankind.
 Com'st thou the first, to view this dreary state?
 And was the noblest the first mark of fate?

Condemn'd to pay the great arrear so soon,
 The lot, which all lament, and none can shun;
 Oh! better hadst thou sunk in Trojan ground,
 With all thy full-blown honours cover'd round!
 Then grateful Greece with streaming eyes might raise
 Historic marbles to record thy praise:

Thy praise eternal on the faithful stone
 Had with transmissive glories grac'd thy son.
 But heavier fates were destin'd to attend:
 What man is happy, till he knows his end?

O son of Pelcus! greater than mankind!
 (Thus Agamemnon's kingly shade rejoin'd)
 Thrice happy thou! to press the martial plain
 Midst heaps of heroes in thy quarrel slain:
 In clouds of smoke, rais'd by the noble fray,
 Great, and terrific even in death you lay,
 And deluges of blood flow'd round you ev'ry way.
 Nor ceas'd the strife, till Jove himself oppos'd,
 And all in tempests the dire ev'ning clos'd.

}

Then to the fleet we bore thy honour'd load,
 And decent on the fun'ral bed bestow'd.
 Then unguents sweet, and tepid streams we shed;
 Tears flow'd from ev'ry eye, and o'er the dead
 Each clipt the curling honours of his head.

}

Struck at the news, thy azure mother came;
 The sea-green sisters waited on the dame.
 A voice of loud lament thro' all the main
 Was heard, and terror seiz'd the Grecian train:
 Back to their ships the frighted host had fled;
 But Nestor spoke, they listen'd, and obey'd.

(From old experience Nestor's counsel springs,
And long vicissitudes of human things)

"Forbear your flight: Fair Thetis from the main,
"To mourn Achilles leads her azure train."

Around thee stand the daughters of the deep,
Robe thee in heav'nly vests, and round thee weep,
Round thee, the muses, with alternate strain,
In ever-consecrating verse, complain.

Each warlike Greek the moving music hears,¹
And iron-hearted heroes melt in tears.

'Till sev'nteen nights and sev'nteen days return'd,
All that was mortal or immortal mourn'd.

To flames we gave thee, the succeeding day,
And fatted sheep and fable oxen slay;

With oils and honey blaze th' augmented fires,
And like a God adorn'd, thy earthly part expires.

Unnumber'd warriors round the burning pyle
Urge the fleet courser's, or the racer's toil;

Thick clouds of dust o'er all the circle rise,
And the mixt clamour thunders in the skies.

Soon as absorpt in all-embracing flame
Sunk what was mortal of thy mighty name.

We then collect thy snowy bones, and place
With wines and unguents in a golden vase.

(The vase to Thetis Bacchus gave of old,
And Vulcan's art enrich'd the sculptur'd gold)

There we thy relics, great Achilles! blend
With dear Patroclus, thy departed friend:

In the same urn a sep'rate space contains
Thy next belov'd, Antilochus' remains,

Now all the sons of warlike Greece surround
 Thy destin'd tomb, and cast a mighty mound:
 High on the shore the growing hill we raise,
 That wide th'extended Hellespont surveys;
 Where all, from age to age who pass the coast,
 May point Achilles' tomb, and hail the mighty ghost.
 Thetis herself to all our peers proclaims
 Heroic prizes and exequial games;
 The Gods assented; and around thee lay
 Rich spoils and gifts that blaz'd against the day.
 Oft have I seen with solemn fun'ral games
 Heroes and kings committed to the flames;
 But strength of youth, or valour of the brave
 With nobler contest ne'er renown'd a grave.
 Such were the games by azure Thetis giv'n,
 And such thy honours, oh belov'd of heav'n!
 Dear to mankind thy fame survives, nor fades
 Its bloom eternal in the Stygian shades.
 But what to me avail my honours gone,
 Successful toils, and battles bravely won?
 Doom'd by stern Jove, at home to end my life,
 By curst Ægythus, and a faithless wife!

Thus they; while Hermes o'er the dreary plain
 Led the sad numbers by Ulysses slain.
 On each majestic form they cast a view,
 And tim'rous pass'd, and awfully withdrew.
 But Agamemnon, thro' the gloomy shade,
 His antient host Amphimedon survey'd;
 Son of Melanthus! (he began) O say!
 What cause compell'd so many, and so gay,
 To tread the downward, melancholy way?

Say, could one city yield a troop so fair?
 Were all the partners of one native air?
 Or did the rage of stormy Neptune sweep
 Your lives at once, and whelm beneath the deep?
 Did nightly thieves, or pyrates cruel bands,
 Drench with your blood your pillag'd country's sands?
 Or well-defending some beleaguer'd wall,
 Say, for the public did ye greatly fall?
 Inform thy guest; for such I was of yore
 When our triumphant navies touch'd your shore;
 Forc'd a long month the wintry seas to bear,
 To move the great Ulysses to the war.

O king of men! I faithful shall relate
 (Reply'd Amphimedon) our hapless fate.
 Ulysses absent, our ambitious aim
 With rival loves pursu'd his royal dame;
 Her coy reserve, and prudence mix'd with pride,
 Our common suit nor granted, nor deny'd;
 But close with inward hate our deaths design'd;
 Vers'd in all arts of wily womankind.
 Her hand, laborious in delusion, spread
 A spacious loom, and mix'd the various thread;
 Ye peers (she cry'd) who press to gain my heart
 Where dead Ulysses claims no more a part,
 Yet a short space, your rival suit suspend,
 'Till this funereal web my labours end:
 Cease, till to good Laertes I bequeath
 A task of grief, his ornaments of death:
 Lest when the fates his royal ashes claim,
 The Grecian matrons taint my spotless fame;

Should he, long honour'd with supreme command,
Want the last duties of a daughter's hand.

The fiction pleas'd: our gen'rous train complies,
Nor fraud mistrusts in virtue's fair disguise.

The work she ply'd; but studious of delay,

sands? Each following night revers'd the toils of day.

Unheard, unseen, three years her arts prevail;

The fourth, her maid reveal'd th' amazing tale,

And show'd, as unperceiv'd we took our stand,

The backward labours of her faithless hand.

Forc'd, she compleats it; and before us lay

The mingled web, whose gold and silver ray

Display'd the radiance of the night and day.

Just as she finish'd her illustrious toil,

Ill fortune led Ulysses to our isle.

Far in a lonely nook, beside the sea,

At an old swineherd's rural lodge he lay:

Thither his son from sandy Pyle repairs,

And speedy lands, and secretly confers.

They plan our future ruin, and resort

Confed'rate, to the city and the court.

First came the son; the father next succeeds,

Clad like a beggar, whom Eumaeus leads;

Propt on a staff, deform'd with age and care,

And hung with rags, that flutter'd in the air.

Who could Ulysses in that form behold?

Scorn'd by the young, forgotten by the old,

Ill-us'd by all! to ev'ry wrong resign'd,

Patient he suffer'd with a constant mind.

But when, arising in his wrath t' obey

The will of Jove, he gave the vengeance way;

The scatter'd arms that hung around the dome
 Careful he treasur'd in a private room:
 Then, to her suitors bade his queen propose
 The archer's strife: the source of future woes,
 And omen of our death! In vain we drew
 The twanging string, and try'd the stubborn yew:
 To none it yields but great Ulysses' hands;
 In vain we threat; Telemachus commands:
 The bow he snatch'd, and in an instant bent;
 Thro' ev'ry ring the victor arrow went.
 Fierce on the threshold then in arms he stood;
 Pour'd forth the darts, that thirsted for our blood,
 And frown'd before us, dreadful as a God!
 First bleeds Antinous: thick the shafts resound;
 And heaps on heaps the wretches strow the ground;
 This way, and that, we turn, we fly, we fall;
 Some God assisted, and unmann'd us all:
 Ignoble cries precede the dying groans;
 And batter'd brains and blood besmear the stones,
 Thus great Atrides! thus Ulysses drove
 The shades thou seest, from yon' fair realms above.
 Our mangled bodies now deform'd with gore,
 Cold and neglected, spread the marble floor.
 No friend to bathe our wounds! or tears to shed
 O'er the pale corse! the honours of the dead.
 Oh blest Ulysses (thus the king express
 His sudden rapture) in thy consort blest!
 Not more thy wisdom, than her virtue, shin'd;
 Not more thy patience, than her constant mind.
 Icarus' daughter, glory of the past,
 And model to the future age, shall last:

The Gods, to honour her fair fame, shall raise
 (Their great reward) a poet in her praise.
 Not such, oh Tyndarus! thy daughter's deed,
 By whose dire hand her king and husband bled:
 Her shall the muse to infamy prolong,
 Example dread, and theme of tragic song!
 The gen'ral sex shall suffer in her shame,
 And ev'n the best that bears a woman's name.

Thus in the regions of eternal shade
 Conferr'd the mournful phantoms of the dead.

While from the town, Ulysses, and his band,
 Past to Laertes' cultivated land.
 The ground himself had purchas'd with his pain,
 And labour made the rugged soil a plain.
 There stood his mansion of the rural fort,
 With useful buildings round the lowly court:
 Where the few servants that divide his care,
 Took their laborious rest, and homely fare;
 And one Sicilian matron, old and sage,
 With constant duty tends his drooping age.

Here now arriving, to his rustic band
 And martial son, Ulysses gave command.
 Enter the house, and of the bristly swine
 Select the largest to the pow'rs divine.
 Alone, and unattended, let me try
 If yet I share the old man's memory:
 If those dim eyes can yet Ulysses know,
 (Their light and dearest object long ago)
 Now chang'd with time, with absence, and with woe?

Then to his train he gives his spear and shield;
 The house they enter, and he seeks the field;

Thro' rows of shade with various fruitage crown'd,
 And labour'd scenes of richest verdure round.
 Nor aged Dolius, nor his sons were there,
 Nor servants, absent on another care;
 To search the woods for sets of flow'ry thorn,
 Their orchard-bounds to strengthen and adorn.

But all alone the hoary king he found;
 His habit coarse, but warmly wrapt around;
 His head, that bow'd with many a pensive care,
 Fenc'd with a double cap of goatskin hair:
 His buskins old, in former service torn,
 But well repair'd; and gloves against the thorn.
 In this array the kingly gard'ner stood,
 And clear'd a plant, encumber'd with its wood.

Beneath a neighb'ring tree, the chief divine
 Gaz'd o'er his fire, retracing ev'ry line,
 The ruins of himself! now worn away
 With age, yet still majestic in decay!
 Sudden his eyes releas'd their wat'ry store;
 The much-enduring man could bear no more.
 Doubtful he stood, if instant to embrace
 His aged limbs, to kiss his rev'rend face,
 With eager transport to disclose the whole,
 And pour at once the torrent of his soul?
 Not so: his judgment takes the winding way
 Of question distant, and of soft essay,
 More gentle methods on weak age employs,
 And moves the sorrows to enhance the joys.
 Then to his fire with beating heart he moves,
 And with a tender pleasantry reproves:

Who digging round the plant still hangs his head,
Nor ought remits the work, while thus he said.

Great is thy skill, oh father! great thy toil,
Thy careful hand is stamp'd on all the soil,
Thy squadron'd vineyards well thy art declare,
The olive green, blue fig, and pendent pear;
And not one empty spot escapes thy care.

On ev'ry plant and tree thy cares are shown,
Nothing neglected, but thyself alone.

Forgive me, father, if this fault I blame;
Age so advanc'd may some indulgence claim.

Not for thy sloth, I deem thy lord unkind;
Nor speaks thy form a mean or servile mind:
I read a monarch in that princely air,

The same thy aspect, if the same thy care;
Soft sleep, fair garments, and the joys of wine,
These are the rights of age, and should be thine.

Who then thy master, say? and whose the land
So dress'd and manag'd by thy skilful hand?

But chief, oh tell me! (what I question most)
Is this the far-fam'd Ithacensian coast?

For so reported the first man I view'd,
(Some furly islander, of manners rude)

Nor farther conference vouchsaf'd to stay;
Heedless he whistled, and pursu'd his way.

But thou! whom years have taught to understand,
Humanely hear, and answer my demand:

A friend I seek, a wise one and a brave,
Say, lives he yet, or moulders in the grave?

Time was (my fortunes then were at the best)

When at my house I lodg'd this foreign guest;

He said, from Ithaca's fair isle he came,
 And old Laertes was his father's name.
 To him, whatever to a guest is ow'd
 I paid, and hospitable gifts bestow'd;
 To him sev'n talents of pure ore I told,
 Twelve cloaks, twelve vests, twelve tunicks stiff with gold,
 A bowl, that rich with polish'd silver flames,
 And, skill'd in female works, four lovely dames.

At this the father, with a father's fears:
 (His venerable eyes bedimm'd with tears)
 This is the land; but ah! thy gifts are lost,
 For godless men, and rude, possess the coast:
 Sunk is the glory of this once-fam'd shore!
 Thy ancient friend, oh stranger, is no more!
 Full recompence thy bounty else had born;
 For ev'ry good man yields a just return:
 So civil rights demand; and who begins
 The track of friendship, not pursuing, sins.
 But tell me, stranger, be the truth confess,
 What years have circled since thou saw'st that guest?
 That hapless guest, alas! for ever gone!
 Wretch that he was! and that I am! my son!
 If ever man to misery was born,
 'Twas his to suffer, and 'tis mine to mourn!
 Far from his friends, and from his native reign,
 He lies a prey to monsters of the main,
 Or savage beasts his mangled reliques tear,
 Or screaming vultures scatter thro' the air:
 Nor could his mother fun'ral unguents shed,
 Nor wail'd his father o'er th' untimely dead,

Nor his sad consort, on the mournful bier,
Seal'd his cold eyes, or drop'd a tender tear!

But tell me, who thou art? and what thy race?
Thy town, thy parents, and thy native place?
Or if a merchant in pursuit of gain,
What port receiv'd thy vessel from the main:
Or com'st thou single, or attend thy train?

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Then thus the son. From Alybas I came,
My palace there; Eperitus my name.
Not vulgar born, from Aphidas the king
Of Polyphemon's royal line I spring.
Some adverse Daemon from Sicania bore
Our wand'ring course, and drove us on your shore:
Far from the town, an unfrequented bay
Reliev'd our weary'd vessel from the sea.
Five years have circled since these eyes pursu'd
Ulysses parting thro' the fable flood;
Prosp'rous he sail'd, with dexter auguries,
And all the wing'd good omens of the skies.
Well hop'd we then to meet on this fair shore,
Whom heav'n, alas! decreed to meet no more.

Quick thro' the father's heart these accents ran;
Grief seiz'd at once, and wrapt up all the man;
Deep from his soul he sigh'd, and sorrowing spread
A cloud of ashes on his hoary head.

Trembling with agonies of strong delight
Stood the great son, heart-wounded with the sight:

He ran, he seiz'd him with a strict embrace,
With thousand kisses wander'd o'er his face,
I, I am he; oh father rise! behold
Thy son, with twenty winters now grown old;

Thy son, so long desir'd, so long detain'd,
Restor'd, and breathing in his native land:
These floods of sorrow, oh my fire, restrain!
The vengeance is compleat; the suitor-train,
Stretch'd in our palace, by these hands lie slain.

Amaz'd, Laertes. " Give some certain sign,
" (If such thou art) to manifest thee mine."
Lo here the wound (he cries) receiv'd of yore,
The scar indented by the tusky boar,
When by thyself and by Anticlea sent,
To old Autolychus's realms I went.
Yet by another sign thy offspring know;
The sev'ral trees you gave me long ago,
While, yet a child, these fields I lov'd to trace,
And trod thy footsteps with unequal pace:
To ev'ry plant in order as we came,
Well-pleas'd you told its nature, and its name,
Whate'er my childish fancy ask'd, bestow'd;
Twelve pear-trees bowing with their pendent load,
And ten, that red with blushing apples glow'd;
Full fifty purple figs; and many a row
Of various vines that then began to blow,
A future vintage! when the Hours produce
Their latent buds, and Sol exalts the juice.

Smit with the signs which all his doubts explain,
His heart within him melts; his knees sustain
Their feeble weight no more; his arms alone
Support him, round the lov'd Ulysses thrown;
He faints, he sinks, with mighty joys oppress'd:
Ulysses clasps him to his eager breast.

Soon as returning life regains its seat,
 And his breath lengthens, and his pulses beat;
 Yes, I believe (he cries) almighty Jove!
 Heav'n rules us yet, and Gods there are above.
 'Tis so—the suitors for their wrongs have paid——
 But what shall guard us, if the town invade?
 If, while the news thro' ev'ry city flies,
 All Ithaca and Cephalenia rise?

To this Ulysses. As the Gods shall please
 Be all the rest; and let thy soul at ease.
 Haste to the cottage by this orchard side,
 And take the banquet which our cares provide:
 There wait thy faithful band of rural friends,
 And there the young Telemachus attends.

Thus having said, they trac'd the garden o'er,
 And stooping enter'd at the lowly door.
 The swains and young Telemachus they found,
 The victim portion'd, and the goblet crown'd.
 The hoary king his old Sicilian maid
 Perfum'd and wash'd, and gorgeously array'd.
 Pallas attending gives his frame to shine
 With awful port, and majesty divine;
 His gazing son admires the god-like grace,
 And air celestial dawning o'er his face.
 What God, he cry'd, my father's form improves?
 How high he treads, and how enlarg'd he moves?

Oh! would to all the deathless pow'rs on high,
 Pallas and Jove, and him who gilds the sky!
 (Reply'd the king elated with his praise)
 My strength were still, as once in better days:

When the bold Cephalens the leaguer form'd,
 And proud Nericus trembled as I storm'd.
 Such were I now, not absent from your deed
 When the last sun beheld the suitors bleed,
 This arm had aided yours ; this hand bestrown
 Our floors with death, and push'd the slaughter on ;
 Nor had the fire been sep'rate from the son.

They commun'd thus ; while homeward bent their
 The swains, fatigu'd with labours of the day ; (way
 Dolius the first, the venerable man,
 And next his sons, a long-succeeding train,
 For due refecton to the bow'r they came,
 Call'd by the careful old Sicilian dame,
 Who nurs'd the children, and now tends the fire ;
 They see their lord, they gaze, and they admire.
 On chairs and beds in order seated round,
 They share the gladsome board ; the roofs rebound.
 While thus Ulysses to his antient friend :
 " Forbear your wonder, and the feast attend ;
 " The rites have waited long." The chief commands
 Their loves in vain ; old Dolius spreads his hands,
 Springs to his master with a warm embrace,
 And fastens kisses on his hands and face :
 Then thus broke out. Oh long, oh daily mourn'd !
 Beyond our hopes, and to our wish, return'd !
 Conducted sure by heav'n ! for heav'n alone
 Could work this wonder : welcome to thy own !
 And joys and happiness attend thy throne !
 Who knows thy blest, thy wish'd return ? oh say,
 To the chaste queen shall we the news convey ?
 Or hears she, and with blessings loads the day ?

Dismiss that care, for to the royal bride
 Already is it known (the king reply'd,
 And strait resum'd his seat) while round him bows
 Each faithful youth, and breathes out ardent vows:
 Then all beneath their father take their place,
 Rank'd by their ages, and the banquet grace.

Now flying fame the swift report had spread
 Thro' all the city, of the suitors dead.

In throngs they rise, and to the palace crowd;
 Their sighs were many, and the tumult loud.

Weeping they bear the mangled heaps of slain,
 Inhume the natives in their native plain,
 The rest in ships are wasted o'er the main.

Then sad in council all the seniors sate,
 Frequent and full, assembled to debate.

Amid the circle first Eupithes rose,
 Big was his eye with tears, his heart with woes:
 The bold Antinous was his age's pride,
 The first who by Ulysses' arrow dy'd.

Down his wan cheek the trickling torrent ran,
 As mixing words with sighs, he thus began. (wrought,

Great deeds, oh friends! this wondrous man has
 And mighty blessings to his country brought.

With ships he parted, and a num'rous train,
 Those, and their ships he bury'd in the main.

Now he returns, and first essays his hand
 In the best blood of all his native land.

Haste then, and ere to neighb'ring Pyle he flies,
 Or sacred Elis, to procure supplies;
 Arise (or ye for ever fall) arise!

Shame to this age, and all that shall succeed!
 If unreveng'd your sons and brothers bleed.
 Prove that we live, by vengeance on his head,
 Or sink at once forgotten with the dead.

Here ceas'd he, but indignant tears let fall
 Spoke when he ceas'd: dumb sorrow touch'd them all.
 When from the palace to the wond'ring throng
 Sage Medon came, and Phemius came along;
 (Restless and early sleep's soft bands they broke)
 And Medon first th' assembled chiefs bespoke.

Hear me, ye peers and elders of the land,
 Who deem this act the work of mortal hand;
 As o'er the heaps of death Ulysses strode,
 These eyes, these eyes beheld a present God,
 Who now before him, now beside him stood,
 Fought as he fought, and mark'd his way with blood:
 In vain old Mentor's form the God bely'd,
 'Twas heav'n that struck, and heav'n was on his side.

A sudden horror all th' assembly shook,
 When slowly rising, Halitherses spoke:
 (Rev'rend and wise, whose comprehensive view
 At once the present and the future knew)
 Me too ye fathers hear! from you proceed
 The ills you mourn; your own the guilty deed.
 Ye gave your sons, your lawless sons the rein,
 (Oft warn'd by Mentor and myself in vain)
 An absent hero's bed they sought to foil,
 An absent hero's wealth they made their spoil:
 Immod'rate riot, and intemp'rate lust!
 Th' offence was great, the punishment was just.

Weigh then my counsels in an equal scale,
Nor rush to ruin. Justice will prevail.

His mod'rate words some better minds persuade:
They part, and join him; but the number stay'd.
They storm, they shout, with hasty frenzy fir'd,
And second all Eupithes' rage inspir'd.
They cast their limbs in brass; to arms they run;
The broad effulgence blazes in the sun.
Before the city, and in ample plain,
They meet: Eupithes heads the frantic train.
Fierce for his son, he breathes his threats in air;
Fate hears them not, and Death attends him there.

This past on earth, while in the realms above
Minerva thus to cloud-compelling Jove.
May I presume to search thy secret soul?
Oh pow'r supreme, oh ruler of the whole!
Say, hast thou doom'd to this divided state
Or peaceful amity, or stern debate?
Declare thy purpose; for thy will is fate.

Is not thy thought my own? (the God replies
Who rolls the thunder o'er the vaulted skies)
Had not long since thy knowing soul decreed,
The chief's return should make the guilty bleed?
'Tis done, and at thy will the fates succeed.
Yet hear the issue: since Ulysses' hand
Has slain the suitors, heav'n shall bless the land.
None now the kindred of th' unjust shall own;
Forgot the slaughter'd brother, and the son:
Each future day to increase of wealth shall bring,
And o'er the past, oblivion stretch her wing.

Long shall Ulysses in his empire rest,
His people blessing, by his people blest.
Let all be peace. — He said, and gave the nod
That binds the fates; the sanction of the God:
And prompt to execute th' eternal will,
Descended Pallas from th' Olympian hill.

Now sate Ulysses at the rural feast,
The rage of hunger and of thirst repress:
To watch the foe a trusty spy he sent:
A son of Dolius on the message went,
Stood in the way, and at a glance beheld
The foe approach'd, embattel'd on the field.
With backward step he hastens to the bow'r,
And tells the news. They arm with all their pow'r.
Four friends alone Ulysses' cause embrace,
And six were all the sons of Dolius' race:
Old Dolius too his rusted arms put on;
And, still more old, in arms Laertes shone.
Trembling with warmth, the hoary heroes stand,
And brazen panoply invests the band:
The opening gates at once their war display:
Fierce they rush forth: Ulysses leads the way.
That moment joins them with celestial aid,
In Mentor's form, the Jove-descended maid:
The suff'ring hero felt his patient breast
Swell with new joy, and thus his son address.

Behold, Telemachus! (nor fear the sight)
The brave embattel'd; the grim front of fight!
The valiant with the valiant must contend:
Shame not the line whence glorious you descend,

Wide o'er the world their martial fame was spread;
 Regard thyself, the living, and the dead.

Thy eyes, great father! on this battle cast,
 Shall learn from me Penelope was chaste.

So spoke Telemachus: the gallant boy
 Good old Laertes heard with panting joy;
 And, blest! thrice blest this happy day! he cries,
 The day that shows me, ere I close my eyes,
 A son and grandson of th' Arcesian name
 Strive for fair virtue, and contest for fame!

Then thus Minerva in Laertes' ear:
 Son of Arcegius, rev'rend warrior, hear!
 Jove and Jove's daughter first implore in pray'r,
 Then whirling high, discharge thy lance in air.

She said, infusing courage with the word.
 Jove and Jove's daughter then the chief implor'd,
 And whirling high, dismiss the lance in air.
 Full at Eupithes drove the deathful spear:
 The brass-cheek'd helmet opens to the wound;
 He falls, earth thunders, and his arms resound.

Before the father and the conqu'ring son
 Heaps rush on heaps; they fight, they drop, they run.
 Now by the sword and now the jav'lin fall
 The rebel race, and death had swallow'd all;
 But from on high the blue-ey'd virgin cry'd;
 Her awful voice detain'd the headlong tyde.
 " Forbear, ye nations! your mad hands forbear
 " From mutual slaughter: Peace descends to spare.
 Fear shook the nations. At the voice divine
 They drop their jav'lins, and their rage resign.

All scatter'd round their glitt'ring weapons lie;
 Some fall to earth, and some confus'dly fly.
 With dreadful shouts Ulysses pour'd along,
 Swift as an eagle, as an eagle strong.
 But Jove's red arm the burning thunder aims;
 Before Minerva shot the livid flames:
 Blazing they fell, and at her feet expir'd:
 Then stopt the Goddess, trembled, and retir'd.

Descended from the Gods! Ulysses, cease;
 Offend not Jove: obey, and give the peace.

So Pallas spoke: the mandate from above
 The king obey'd. The virgin-seed of Jove
 In Mentors form, confirm'd the full accord,
 "And willing nations knew their lawful lord."

F I N I S.



